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THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE SERIES OF RUSSIAN PLAYS

DIRECTION OF MORRIS GEST

Edited by OLIVER M. SAYLER

VOLUME I

TSAR FYODOR IVANOVITCH

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

COUNT ALEXEI TOLSTOY

English translation by
JENNY COVAN

NEW YORK
BRENTANOS
PUBLISHERS

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INTRODUCTION

It is fitting that the Moscow Art Theatre Series of Russian Plays, published in English translation under the sponsorship of Morris Gest for the benefit of the patrons of this foremost playhouse of the European continent on its visit to America, should be introduced with Count Alexei Tolstoy's spectacular historical tragedy, "Tsar Fyodor Ivanovitch." The works of Gorky and Tchekhoff, likewise included in this series, are more or less familiar, but "Tsar Fyodor" reaches print here for the first time in our language.

For those who are not close students of Russian literature, it is well to identify the author of "Tsar Fyodor" as the elder cousin of Count Lyoff Tolstoy and a poet and dramatist whose plays are more highly esteemed by Russian critics than those of his more versatile, provocative and celebrated relative. Born in 1817 and dying in 1875, his fame rests chiefly on a dramatic trilogy from Russian history: "The Death of Ivan the Terrible" (1866), "Tsar Fyodor Ivanovitch" (1875), and "Tsar Boris" (1870).

Spanning three successive reigns, from 1533 to 1604, this trilogy dramatizes an epoch in Russian history roughly parallel to the height of Tudor power in England. The most human, pathetic and moving of these three plays is "Tsar Fyodor," whose action is set midway in that weak but pious monarch's rule, 1584-1598. Russia had been exhausted by the bloody fanaticism of Ivan the Terrible, whose insane temper had done to death his elder and abler son. Fyodor, the younger, succeeded to the throne, only to find his realm torn wide open by factional fights among the *boyars,* headed on the one hand by his imperial chancellor, Boris Godunoff, and on the other by Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky, with prince and princess, priest and peasant, as mere pawns in the struggle. Striving passionately to compose these feuds, but powerless in his vacillation to affect their course, he

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is one of the most appealing figures in all historical drama.

Around this amazing character study, the dramatist has woven a gorgeous medieval tapestry of word and action. "Tsar Fyodor" is like nothing so much in our language as the Shakespearean chronicles of Plantagenet, Lancastrian, York and Tudor. As the English poet revived the colorful entourages of departed reigns for the sake of the opportunity to depict character among the various Richards and Henrys, so the Russian poet has herein restored the entire pageantry of the court of an ancient Tsar.

The task of restoring to life this pageant of a picturesque and bygone age has been still further perfected by the Moscow Art Theatre's mastery of makeup and psychological realism. With this play, the theatre opened its first season a quarter of a century ago. In its repertory it has remained ever since. Through it, America first becomes acquainted with the work of this astonishing organization. Russia's vivid past breathes once more through the necromancy of her contemporary artists.

"Tsar Fyodor" was written in verse. It has been thought wiser, however, to employ a simple, straightforward prose in this translation in order to avoid undue exaggeration of an already somewhat florid narrative, as judged by current standards. THE EDITOR.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

TSAR FYODOR IVANOVITCH — *Son of Ivan the Terrible.*
TSARINA IRINA FYODOROVNA —
His wife, sister of Godunoff.
BORIS FYODOROVITCH GODUNOFF — *Imperial Chancellor.*
PRINCE IVAN PETROVITCH SHOUISKY—
Cavalry Officer.
DIONISY — *Metropolitan of All the Russias.*
VARLAAM — *Archbishop of Krutits.*
IOFF — *Archbishop of Rostoff.*

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COADJUTOR OF THE HOLY SYNOD.
ARCHIMANDRITE OF THE HOLY SYNOD.
COURT CHAPLAIN.
PRINCE VASSILY IVANOVITCH SHOUISKY—
Nephew of Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky.
PRINCE ANDREI
PRINCE DIMITRY } *Of the Shouisky family.*
PRINCE IVAN
PRINCE MSTISLAVSKY
PRINCE KHVOROSTININ
PRINCE SHAKHOVSKOY } *Officers of the Shouisky faction.*
MIKHAILO GOLOVIN
ANDREI PETROVITCH LOUP-KLESHNIN —
Tsar Fyodor's former tutor, of the Godunoff faction.
PRINCE TUREYNIN — *Of the Godunoff faction.*
PRINCESS MSTISLAVSKAYA —
Niece of Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky, fiancée of Prince Shakhovskoy.
VASSILISA VOLOKHOVA — *Marriage-broker.*
BOGDAN KURIUKOFF
IVAN KRASSILNIKOFF
GOLUB, SENIOR } *Delegates from Moscow, of the Shouisky faction.*
GOLUB, JUNIOR
FEDIUK STARKOFF —
Aide-de-camp of Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky.
LUTE-PLAYER.
IMPERIAL GROOM.
A SERVANT OF BORIS GODUNOFF.
COURIER — *from the village of Tieshloff.*
COURIER — *from the village of Uglitch.*
MAN-OF-ARMS.
NOBLEMEN, NOBLEWOMEN, CHAMBERMAIDS, STEWARDS, DEACONS, POPES, PRIESTS, MERCHANTS, COUNTRY PEOPLE, ARCHERS, SERVANTS, BEGGARS, *and crowds.*

ACTION: — The action takes place at Moscow, at the end of the Sixteenth Century.

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ACT ONE.

SCENE I.

The Home of Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky.

At the extreme left is a table around which are grouped all the members of the Shouisky household, except Ivan Petrovitch and Vassily Ivanovitch.

Next to the Shouiskys are grouped the Coadjutor of the Holy Synod, the Archimandrite of the Holy Synod, and several other clerics. A few noblemen are also seated at the table, while others stroll around, chatting, in the background. To the right is a group of merchants and tradespeople; and there is, too, another table with tumblers and dishes at which Starkoff, Prince Ivan Petrovitch's Aide-de-Camp, stands waiting.

ANDREI SHOUISKY [*to the clerics*] Yes, yes, Reverend Fathers. I place great hopes upon the outcome of this affair. Godunoff really reigns — reigns through his sister. By her alone he stands to-day greater and stronger than all the nobles of this land. Already he handles Russia, people and lands and Holy Church, as if it were his own domain. Get rid of his sister — and we can manage him.

ARCHIMANDRITE. So Prince Ivan Petrovitch gave his consent?

ANDREI SHOUISKY. Very reluctantly! You see, he greatly pities the Tsarina. There will be a wedding in my family. My niece is going to be Prince Shakhovskoy's bride — with joy and laughter — while grief will stalk

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through the imperial palace when I shall tear apart Tsar and Tsarina.

COADJUTOR. Prince Ivan is very soft-hearted.

DIMITRY SHOUISKY. That's his nature. On the battlefield like a lion! But let him take off his uniform, and you would not imagine him to be the same man!

GOLOVIN. But how did he finally give his consent?

ANDREI SHOUISKY. Thanks to Prince Vassily who *made* him give it.

GOLOVIN. No good can come of it. My opinion is: if you do a thing, do it thoroughly — or not at all.

ANDREI SHOUISKY. And what would *you* do?

GOLOVIN. I would simplify matters. But this is not the time to talk of it. Shh! Here he is now!

[*Enter Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky referred to hereafter as Ivan who has a paper in his hand.*]

IVAN. Reverend Fathers! Princes! Nobles! My respects to you — and to you, too, merchants! At last I have decided. No longer can we tolerate Godunoff. We of the faction of Shouisky are patriots. We are ready to fight for our fatherland, our church, the welfare and future of Russia, while Godunoff's success spells Russia's ruin. We shall not permit it. It is between him and us. Read, Vassily Ivanovitch.

VASSILY SHOUISKY [*reading*] "To the Almighty Prince of All the Russias, our Ever-Victorious Tsar, the Emperor Fyodor Ivanovitch! We, the clerics, princes, nobles, and merchants of all Russia, address you, Majesty! Have mercy upon us, your subjects! Your Tsarina, a Godunoff by birth, has borne you no children, while a great misfortune has befallen your brother, Dimitry Ivanovitch. And should you, through the will of God, be taken from us, your dynasty would become extinct and your kingdom orphaned. Thus pity us, All-Powerful Emperor! Do not permit your father's throne to become

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empty! For the sake of your race and for the welfare of your people, Almighty Emperor, be graciously pleased to take another wife unto yourself. Take for your Tsarina —"

IVAN. We will write the name in later on, after we and His Holiness have come to a decision. Read on.

VASSILY SHOUISKY [*continuing*] "Send your childless Tsarina into a convent, as your late father, the Almighty Prince Ivan Vassilitch, decreed. And to this, the humble prayer of All the Russias, we have to-day affixed our signatures."

IVAN [*to the noblemen*] Are you all willing to sign?

THE NOBLES. Yes!

IVAN [*to the clerics*] And you, Reverend Fathers?

THE COADJUTOR. His Holiness sends his blessings and commands us to join forces with you.

ARCHIMANDRITE. No longer shall Godunoff be permitted to overrule Our Lord's Holy Church.

IVAN [*to the merchants*] And you?

MERCHANTS. Your Grace, who are we, not to follow where you lead? We have been suffering under a great disadvantage ever since Godunoff exempted the English traders from paying taxes.

IVAN [*takes his pen*] Forgive me, Lord God! It is for the welfare of our people that I lay this crime upon my soul!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Come, come, uncle. Why call it a crime? It is not through enmity to Irina that you propose doing away with her, but to strengthen the throne of Russia.

IVAN. True! I shall do away with her to destroy Boris Godunoff. Why torture my soul about it? My path is not without thorns.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Why, uncle — ? What attraction can Irina find in worldly pomp? Compared to

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heavenly bliss, everything else seems tawdry and vain to her.

IVAN. I repeat, my path is not without thorns. But I shall not turn back. It is better that the Tsarina, though innocent, should perish than our country. [*Signs*] Sign — all of you! [*They all sign. Ivan goes to one side, and Prince Shakhovskoy joins him.*]

SHAKHOVSKOY. Your Grace, when will you permit me to see my fiancée?

IVAN. That's your one and only worry — your fiancée! Can't you wait? Be patient. She will come down with the others to greet you.

SHAKHOVSKOY. Your Grace, you never let me see her except when there are other people present.

IVAN. And you would like to see her alone, I know. You are young, Prince, and I am a man of conventions. I hold conventions to be not only the basis of national, but also of family life.

SHAKHOVSKOY. And were you living up to your own conventions that time in Pskoff when Zamoisky tried to kill you, and when after you had caught him red-handed, you challenged him to a duel as if he were an honest man?

IVAN. Zamoisky was not a pink-cheeked maiden, and I was not betrothed to him. There is no shame in meeting one's enemy in single combat.

[*Shakhovskoy walks away and Golovin joins Ivan.*]

GOLOVIN [*in an undertone*] The matter could be settled more easily and speedily, should you so wish, Your Grace. The inhabitants of Uglitch are thinking of Dimitry Ivanovitch.

IVAN. Well — what of it?

GOLOVIN. They say in Moscow that Fyodor is weak in body, soul, and spirit — so — if you . . .

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IVAN. Take care, Mikhailo Golovin, lest I should guess what you are driving at.

GOLOVIN. Your Grace . . .

IVAN. For the present I let your insinuations pass in one ear and out the other. But should you speak of it again, before God! I shall tell the Tsar!

[*Princess Mstislavskaya enters in full evening dress, followed by two handmaidens and Volokhova, carrying a tray with tumblers. All bow to the Princess.*]

VASSILY SHOUISKY [*softly to Golovin*] You certainly guessed wrong when you tried to make a tool of Ivan Petrovitch — Why — he would rather let himself be torn to pieces! Stop this nonsense.

GOLOVIN. If he were only willing —

VASSILY SHOUISKY. If! If my grandmother had a beard she would be my grandfather!

IVAN. And now, dear guests, take the glasses which my niece will offer you.

[*Volokhova hands the tray to the Princess who serves the guests, bowing to them.*]

SHAKHOVSKOY [*to the Princess, in a whisper, after accepting the glass which she hands him*] Will you permit me to see you very soon?

[*The Princess turns away.*]

VOLOKHOVA [*in a whisper to Shakhovskoy*] To-morrow night — by the garden gate —

IVAN [*lifting the tumbler which Starkoff hands him*] First let us drink to the health of our Tsar and Sovereign, Fyodor Ivanovitch. May he be our ruler for many a year to come!

ALL TOGETHER. Long life to the Tsar!

IVAN. And now permit me to drink your health, gentlemen!

PRINCE KHVOROSTININ. Prince Ivan Petrovitch! A

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long time you shielded us against Latvia! Be now our shield against Boris Godunoff.

COADJUTOR. May the Lord God bless you, the defender of Holy Church!

ARCHIMANDRITE. The destroyer of Nebuchadnezzar!

MERCHANTS. Your Grace, you are to us a very bulwark of defense. We shall follow you through fire and flood.

PRINCE KHVOROSTININ. Prince! Allow us now to toast the young bride and groom.

ALL TOGETHER. Long may they live!

IVAN. I thank you, dear guests, I thank you. Though she is only my niece, she is to me like my own daughter. Princess! And you, Grigory! Bow your thanks, my children!

ALL [*drinking*] Long life to the handsome groom and his charming bride!

IVAN. Thank you all. [*To Mstislavskaya*] You may leave us now, Natasha. You are still a child, not yet used to these worldly affairs. Why — you are blushing like a rose! [*Kisses her gently on the forehead*] Go now, my dear.

[*The Princess, Volokhova and the Handmaidens leave. Volokhova, in passing Shakhovskoy.*]

VOLOKHOVA. Don't forget — near the garden gate — and don't forget my little present!

IVAN. We have no time to lose. Let us send this address at once to His Holiness, and then spread it broadcast throughout all Moscow.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. No gossiping — God forbid!

ALL. May God protect us!

IVAN. Forgive me, all of you! His Holiness will let us know when to present ourselves before the Tsar.

[*They move here and there, prepared to leave.*]

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My path is not without thorns. To-day I understand how the man who fights against trickery cannot remain clean. The fight between truth and falsehood is uneven, unfair, and it is a most difficult task for an honest man to master the art of trickery. Fortunate is he who can face his enemies, openly, on the field of battle! Though thunder and lightning rage above his head, his soul is clean and certain of itself. To-day the knowledge that I am guilty of wrong is like a heavy stone upon my heart. But God is my witness that there are no other paths open to us. We can get no support from the Tsar. He is like soft putty in the hands of the man who knows how to fashion him. He is not our real ruler. Our real ruler is his brother-in-law, and all Russia clamors for protection against him! Russia looks to us — to us alone! There is no other choice! We need a falsehood to combat a falsehood! And may the crime which willingly I load upon my life haunt Godunoff's conscience! [*Leaves.*]

STARKOFF [*looking after him*] A falsehood to combat a falsehood! Very well. Then do not blame me, sir, if I, too, tell a falsehood and, by the same token, tell what is true of you.

SCENE II.

Room in the Imperial palace. Godunoff is sitting at a table deep in thought. Near him stands Loup-Kleshnin and Prince Tureynin. Starkoff stands waiting at the door.]

KLESHNIN [*to Starkoff*] And so you will testify to everything?

STARKOFF. To everything — absolutely everything, sir! You may bring me face to face with the Tsar at once, if such be your wish!

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KLESHNIN. Very well. Go, my dear fellow. We are satisfied.

[*Starkoff leaves.*]

KLESHNIN [*to Godunoff*] So that is how it stands? The sister is to be sent to a convent — and the brother is to be knifed! Led by His Holiness they will approach the Tsar!

GODUNOFF [*deep in thought*] Seven years have passed since Tsar Ivan's death. And now, when I may not even ward off the blow, whatever work I did for Russia is tumbling, and we shall again find ourselves plunged into the abyss as at the time of Tsar Ivan Vassilitch's death.

KLESHNIN. They are plotting and counter-plotting. Golovin, one of their henchmen, has won over the Nagi clan of Uglitch, and here they plan separating the Tsar from the Tsarina. So if they fail in one place, they are bound to succeed in the other; like a cat — if it cannot bite, it scratches!

TUREYNIN [*to Godunoff*] Sir, do not permit them to offer their respects in audience to the Tsar. You know what he is like — he cannot say "No" to priests.

KLESHNIN. You must take no risks. No wonder the late Tsar nicknamed him the sexton. Ah — Little Father Ivan Vassilitch! If you were alive to-day you would know how to deal with the Nagis and the Shouiskys!

GODUNOFF. Have we received no news from Uglitch?

KLESHNIN. None whatever. Just let Bitanovsky send us written evidence that Golovin corresponded with the Nagis, and then we shall know how to handle the Shouiskys.

TUREYNIN. And suppose he is double-crossing us?

KLESHNIN. No matter! With such evidence they are in our hands.

TUREYNIN. So much the better for us. I, on the

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other hand, have an old account to settle with Prince Ivan Petrovitch. We were dying of hunger in Pskoff while we were exposed day and night to a rain of bullets, and I, out of sheer pity for the tradespeople who were perishing, advised them to open negotiations with the king of Batur. But Prince Ivan Petrovitch ordered the noose to be put about my neck, and I was pardoned, thanks only to the prayers of some pious pilgrims. I have not forgotten it, and I would give all I own if I could put the noose around *his* neck.

KLESHNIN. Bad luck to him! He is kindly to merchants and tradespeople and other such rogues — with us he is haughty. Ah — if only we could get the written evidence!

TUREYNIN [*to Godunoff*] Your fate hangs by a thread. You must decide!

GODUNOFF [*rising*] I have decided!

TUREYNIN. What?

GODUNOFF. To make peace.

TUREYNIN AND KLESHNIN [*together*] What? Peace with the Shouiskys?

GODUNOFF. To-morrow they and I shall become friends.

TUREYNIN. What? Give in to them? You are willing to divide the power with them?

KLESHNIN. Why, Little Father, have you lost your mind? You are letting the bull into the china shop!

GODUNOFF. When a great storm rages and the ship and all it contains is threatened with disaster, only a madman will refuse to throw overboard part of his treasure in order to save something from the wreck. Half of my rights I shall throw into the waves, but the ship itself I shall save!

KLESHNIN. How will you meet them? Will you be

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the one to submit to them, or will you ask them to come to you? And who will make peace between you?

GODUNOFF. The Tsar himself.

[*A steward opens the door.*]

TURBYNIN. Here comes the Tsar.

[*Enter Tsar Fyodor, followed by the Imperial Groom.*]

FYODOR. Groom! Why did my horse balk?

GROOM. Your Majesty, you reached for your purse to give alms to a beggar; at the same moment, the horse darted forward, you pulled the reins, and the animal became frightened.

FYODOR. I was as much frightened as the horse. Groom, do not give him oats. Let him have only hay.

KLESHNIN. Tsar, if I were in your place, I would suggest putting the thumb-screws on the groom to teach him not to give wild horses to Your Majesty.

GROOM. Why, sir, how can this horse be wild? He is twenty-five years old! The late Tsar used to ride him!

FYODOR. Perhaps it was my own fault after all. I spurred him a little too much. You say he balked because he became frightened?

GROOM. Yes, Your Majesty, because he became frightened!

FYODOR. Well, then, this time I forgive him; but I will not ride him again. Pension him off — and give him his full share of oats until his death. [*Tsarina Irina comes in through the other door*] Good day, Irinushka!

IRINA. Good day, light of my soul! Are you tired?

FYODOR. Yes, yes, quite tired, I trotted steadily all the way from Andron. Right here, near the palace gate, the horse tried to throw me. But I mastered him. I spurred him so hard that he quieted down. Irinushka, I take it that dinner is ready?

IRINA. Yes, light of my soul, eat to your heart's content.

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FYODOR. Of course, of course. We shall dine right away. The ride gave me a ravenous appetite. They have lovely chimes at Andron. I want to send for their sacristan, and have him show me how he handles them. . . . Irinushka, what a beauty I saw at Andron's house! Do you know who? Mstislavskaya! She is a niece of the Shouiskys. Have you seen her, brother-in-law?

GODUNOFF. No, your Majesty, for years I have not been on speaking terms with the Shouiskys.

FYODOR. What a pity, brother-in-law, what a great pity! . . . She is so tall and slender — and what a complexion!

IRINA. Aren't you a bit infatuated with her, Fyodor?

FYODOR. And — oh — what eyebrows!

IRINA. Really! You talk of her a great deal.

FYODOR. What of it, Irinushka? After all I'm not yet an old man. I can still attract women.

IRINA. Shame on you! She is engaged!

FYODOR. Yes, to Shakhovskoy. Brother-in-law, do you know Prince Grigory Shakhovskoy?

GODUNOFF. I used to know him, Your Majesty. But he is now an ally of the Shouiskys.

FYODOR. Brother-in-law, it grieves me to hear this; this one is allied with the Shouiskys, and that one is your ally! Will I ever live to see the day when one and all shall be Russia's allies?

GODUNOFF. It would make me happy, Your Majesty. I would not be the one to lag behind if I only knew how to make peace.

FYODOR. Really, brother-in-law? You mean it? Why didn't you tell me before? I shall make peace between you. To-morrow I shall bring you and Prince Ivan Petrovitch together.

GODUNOFF. I am ready, Your Majesty. But it seems to me . . .

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FYODOR. Not another word! Don't you bother your head about it, Boris. You would not know how. Go on administering the country. That is a thing you know, and know well. But I shall attend to the other matter. For it demands a knowledge of the human soul. To-morrow, then, I shall make peace between you. And now let us go in to dinner. [*Turns toward doors, stops*] Listen, Irinushka; just the same, Mstislavskaya kept on looking on me in church!

IRINA. What can I do, Fyodor? It is to be my bitter destiny, evidently.

FYODOR [*embracing her*] Dear heart! Beloved! I was only jesting. Why — is there any one in all the world more lovely than you? Come, let us go and eat before our dinner gets cold.

[*Fyodor leaves, Irina following. Godunoff, Kleshnin, and Tureynin follow toward door.*]

KLESHNIN [*to Godunoff, leaving room*] So you are going to make peace, eh? And you will become friends with your deadliest foe?

TUREYNIN. The one who hates you most! And then what?

GODUNOFF. And then — we shall see!

[*They leave.*]

CURTAIN

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ACT TWO.

Room in the Tsar's palace. Tsar Fyodor is sitting in a large arm-chair. To his right Irina is doing gold-thread embroidery on a frame. To the left, sitting in arm-chairs are: Dionisy, Metropolitan of Russia; Varlaam, Archbishop of Krutits; Ioff, Archbishop of Rostoff; Boris Godunoff. A number of nobles are at hand.

FYODOR. Most Reverend Father Dionisy! Reverend Father Ioff! And you, Father Varlaam! I sent for you, Reverend Sirs, to help me in an important matter; in other words, to assist me in making peace between two old foes. You know how long I have grieved over the fact that the Shouiskys, an honorable family, and Boris Godunoff, my esteemed brother-in-law, have been estranged by a useless feud. But apparently the Lord has listened to my prayers and has endowed Boris' heart with the spirit of humility. He himself promised me to-day to forget his enemies' deeds, and to be the first to offer his hand to the Shouiskys. Is that not so, brother-in-law?

GODUNOFF. It is my duty to bow to your wishes, Your Majesty.

FYODOR. Thank you, brother-in-law! You remember the Blessed Scriptures, and faithfully you observe their lessons. There is one thing, though, about Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky which I wish to tell you. He is inclined to be a little harsh and proud and aggressive. So it would be better if you say as little as possible to

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each other, and perhaps it would be best if you should go to him and shake his hand — like this — and tell him that everything is forgotten and that hereafter you wish to live in peace with him and his clan.

GODUNOFF. I am ready!

FYODOR. Thank you, brother-in-law! Do not forget — he is a warrior. He has grown up amidst the clang of battle, the roar of the cannons, the clash of steel, and the thud of lance and halberd. But he is a pious man for all that, and he will doubtless listen to friendly words. [*To Dionisy*] As for you, Most Reverend Father, as soon as they clasp hands, give them your blessing quickly, and speak to them encouraging words.

DIONISY. It is my duty, Your Majesty, as a servant of Christ's Holy Church, to bring to everybody the message of peace. Be this a religious matter or not, yet shall I try to win over Prince Shouisky.

FYODOR. Most Reverend Father, we stand ready, one and all, to defend the Church. Boris and I and Shouisky, we all are stanch supporters of the Faith.

DIONISY. All-Powerful Tsar, your zeal is well known to us, but unfortunately your will does not empower all decisions. [*Looks at Godunoff meaningly*] When our Holy Synod found some merchants of Novgorod guilty of heresy, they were permitted a few days later to go free and return to Novgorod and tempt the peasants with their evil doctrines.

GODUNOFF. Your Holiness, these merchants trade with German towns, and thus bring a great deal of profit to our government. Without them Novgorod would be ruined.

DIONISY. Is it for the sake of profit that heretics should be allowed to go unpunished?

GODUNOFF. God forbid, Most Reverend Father! The Tsar has already ordered his soldiers to arrest the pro-

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pounder of these heresies. But the Tsar differentiates between tempter and tempted.

FYODOR. Of course, brother-in-law. And, Most Reverend Sir, even the tempters themselves should neither be punished nor tortured. They should answer for their sins to the Lord God. You yourself can exhort them. For, Reverend Sir, it is not without reason that they call you a wise theologian.

DIONISY. We try to do the best we can through exhortation. But you are not aware of all the facts. The bailiffs and tax and revenue collectors began to join churches and monasteries for their own ends, and they brought into play forgotten tricks and twists to influence the people.

GODUNOFF. Most Reverend Father, the Almighty Tsar has forestalled all your grievances. There will not arise in the future another occasion for us to take extreme measures. [*Hands him an official paper*] Here is the decree, Reverend Father, which will prevent these people from joining, for reasons of personal benefit, the monasteries and the organizations of Holy Church, and which transfers the jurisdiction in such cases from the imperial courts to the Church itself.

FYODOR. Yes, Reverend Father, he wrote it, and I affixed my seal to it.

DIONISY [*glancing at the document*] Blessed be the peace-makers! When the imperial chancellor promises to guarantee our statutory rights, exemptions and privileges, then all past grievances shall be forgotten.

FYODOR. Right, right, Reverend Father! Father Varlaam, come and assist His Holiness.

VARLAAM. Your Majesty, I shall second whatever His Holiness decides in this matter.

FYODOR. Father Ioff, I depend upon you, too.

IOFF. Your chancellor, Almighty Emperor, is both

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kindly and wise, and it is our duty to pray to God for peace and good-will.

FYODOR. You, too, Irinushka, I shall ask to say a helpful word to Shouisky should he show himself obstinate. A word from a woman's lips means a great deal and softens a steely heart. I know from experience. I would never give in to a man, but just let a woman or child appeal to me, and I would gladly do anything.

IRINA. My Tsar and Lord, we shall do exactly as you command; but what weight has our word against yours? If you will only tell him firmly that their estrangement angers you, Prince Ivan Petrovitch will never dare to disregard your wishes.

FYODOR. Yes, yes, of course; I will instruct him, I will command him! And you, gentlemen, engage them quickly in conversation; do not remain silent. There is nothing worse for two adversaries who have come together in peace than for everybody to stand round and silently watch while they stare at each other. . . .

KLESHNIN. We would be grateful, Your Majesty, if the Prince of Shoui would permit us occasionally to open our mouths.

FYODOR. What do you mean — Prince of Shoui — ?

KLESHNIN. I mean that he behaves like an independent potentate, and not like a servant of Your Majesty.

KHVOROSTININ. Your Majesty, your former tutor cannot forgive the Shouiskys for siding with the Nagi faction.

GOLOVIN. There are some who wish to ask you to recall the Tsarievitch to Moscow.

FYODOR. Dimitry? I would be glad to! Dear lad! I feel he must be lonely there, while here I could cheer him up; I could take him to play and dance and bear-

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fight! I have asked Boris time and again, but he tells me steadfastly that it cannot be done.

KLESHNIN. And he is right! It was not without reason that your late father exiled the Nagis to Uglitch. He knew the Nagis. He never allowed them too much liberty, and your brother-in-law, too, is watching them closely.

FYODOR. Petrovitch, Petrovitch, you are speaking against the uncles of the Tsarievitch!

KLESHNIN. The Tsarievitch? And how so? And I suppose his mother, her husband's seventh wife, was thus Tsarina? During your father's lifetime there were Tsarinas and to spare of her breed!

FYODOR. Come, come! Dimitry and I are brothers, and the Nagis are his uncles, so don't you dare criticize them in my presence.

KLESHNIN. Must I then praise them for wanting to overthrow you and put their own pretender upon the throne?

FYODOR. How dare you?

KLESHNIN. Must I also praise the Shouiskys for allying themselves with the Nagis?

FYODOR. I tell you — be silent, be silent! At once!

KLESHNIN [*walking toward window*] Very well, then. I shall not say another word!

FYODOR [*to Godunoff*] Next time, brother-in-law, do not allow him to criticize my brother and my stepmother.

GODUNOFF. Your Majesty, he is a simple man who means well. [*Yells are heard outside.*]

KLESHNIN [*looking from window*] Here they come.

FYODOR. Who?

NOBLES [*looking from window*] The Shouiskys!

FYODOR [*stepping to window*] What? They are here already?

KLESHNIN. Yes. They are already at the outer gate.

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[*The yells grow louder*] See — first comes Ivan Petrovitch, surrounded by swarms of merchants! Listen — how they yell! They throw their hats into the air! They are pushing the archers out of the way! They have seized both Ivan's arms — they are leading him up the steps! Why — they do not show such enthusiasm even for their own Tsar!

FYODOR. Look here, brother-in-law, do not forget your promise. And you, Irinushka, watch carefully! Should matters not run smoothly, you must help. Reverend Father, I rely on you absolutely! [*Quickly resumes his seat.*]

STEWARD [*opening the door*] Prince Ivan Petrovitch!

[*Enter the Shouiskys; followed by Mstislavsky, Shakhovskoy, and others.*]

KLESHNIN [*in an undertone to Tureynin, glancing at the Shouiskys*] Just look at them! They do not even bow!

IVAN [*kneeling*] Almighty Tsar! We are here in obedience to your command!

FYODOR. Rise, Prince Ivan Petrovitch! Rise quickly! Do not kneel at my feet! [*Helps him to his feet*] The Tsarina and I have not seen you for a long time. You were doubtless busy with family affairs. I have been told that you are giving your niece in marriage?

IVAN. True, Your Majesty!

FYODOR. I am glad, very glad. I congratulate you. So, as I said to you before, it is a long time since we have seen you — but perhaps you have had no leisure? This wedding — I presume that is why you have not attended the Duma of late?

IVAN. Your Majesty, what business have I at the Duma as long as not the Duma but your brother-in-law settles the affairs of the empire? He has enough adherents amongst the nobility without me.

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FYODOR. Ivan Petrovitch! It grieves me to see that you and my brother-in-law have become so estranged. Our Lord God Himself commands us to love each other. Is such not God's command, Most Reverend Father?

DIONISY. Indeed, Your Majesty!

FYODOR. You see, Prince? What did the blessed Apostle say to the Corinthians? "I pray . . ." How does it go, Father Varlaam?

VARLAAM. "I beseech you that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

FYODOR. You see? And what did Apostle Peter say to the people? "Do not be unforgiving —" What else did he say Father Ioff?

IOFF. "Finally be ye all like minded, loving as brethren; not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling!" And your brother-in-law, Almighty Tsar, indeed lives up to the Apostle's words.

FYODOR. Yes, Father Ioff, yes! Rest assured, Ivan Petrovitch, that he respects you. We all admire your stanchness. Well, then, if only you were willing — if only you and Boris — [*In a whisper to Godunoff*] Go on, brother-in-law!

GODUNOFF. Prince Ivan Petrovitch! I have brooded long over our ancient feud. If you are willing to forget the past, then so will I, and I would gladly be a brother to you and your clan. And so I offer you my hand in peace!

IVAN [*drawing back*] Sir! Our enmity is too bitter and too real that it may be thus lightly dismissed!

GODUNOFF. What else then do you demand, Prince?

IVAN. Most noble Godunoff. I accuse you of disregarding Tsar Ivan Vassilitch"s wishes and testament, who on his death bed recommended that Russia be adminis-

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tered by five nobles. I was one; Zakarin-Yourieff another; Mstislavsky was the third; Bielsky the fourth, and yourself the fifth. And who is governing Russia to-day, pray tell!

GODUNOFF. Tsar Fyodor Ivanovitch! I am only the executor of his imperial will.

IVAN. Do not evade the issue, sir! You have usurped the imperial power by craftiness! As soon as Tsar Ivan passed away you banished Bielsky, while you forced Mstislavsky to become a monk; as for Nikita Romanovitch Yourieff, illness followed by death rid you of him. Only you and I remained. But you avoided me, and taking advantage of your position, you began suggesting to the Tsar whatever command you wished to be issued, and you interfered boldly with the rights of nobles and merchants, and even with those of the Church. Dissatisfaction became rife . . .

GODUNOFF. Prince, permit me to say a word. . . .

IVAN. Dissatisfaction became rife. But the Tsar's name was your shield. He, however, saw through you. The inhabitants of Moscow appealed to us, and we Shouiskys pledged ourselves to defend truth, and with us are all the people. This is the root of our mutual hatred. I have spoken the whole truth. Let the Tsar settle this matter between us.

GODUNOFF. Prince Ivan Petrovitch! The Almighty Tsar wishes to make peace between us, but your words breathe enmity. Prince! I shall not reply to your accusations by counter-accusations, but I shall simply attempt to clear myself. You accuse me, Prince, of having usurped the power? But remember! Were you willing to coöperate with me? Were you not always the one to reject my advances? And, being absolutely unable to brook contradictions, was it not you who broke away? Then the Almighty Tsar, noticing your indifference, en-

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trusted the entire nation to my care. I, on the other hand, accepted the trust solely for the sake of Russia. The war with Latvia is ended, and we did not cede one foot of Russian ground. In order to subdue the Tartar horde we gave the chieftainship to the old chief's nephew, and the former chief, frightened, surrendered. We quelled the Tcheremeesian uprising. We concluded a truce with the Swedes. With the German Emperor and with Denmark we strengthened our peace, while we signed with England a commercial treaty which may not altogether please our Moscow friends, but is of palpable benefit to our nation as a whole. Yet at the very time when Russia began to rise from the ashes of strife and poverty, you, Prince — and I do not mean to hurt your feelings — you, together with your brothers, inflamed the Moscow mob against me and secretly instructed intriguers to complain about me to the Tsar!

ANDREI SHOUISKY [*stepping forward*] It is not for personal reasons that we took strong measures, sir. It was only when you began usurping the imperial prerogatives that we and the people rose to the defense.

DIMITRY SHOUISKY. Such things did not occur even in the days of Tsar Ivan, sir.

IVAN IVANOVITCH SHOUISKY. The late Tsar was very severe with his courtiers. Those close to him feared him; those far from him lived fearlessly their own lives. You, however, seem to have enmeshed all Russia in a net, and there is no peace for any one, anywhere, from you!

GODUNOFF. When after long chaos Russia's house once more was being put in order, the healing of old wounds brought pain. Naturally! To strengthen a tottering building, there are walls which must be torn down. But, by the grace of God, we have passed the inevitable period of suffering, and every one has acknowledged the wisdom of the Tsar. You Shouiskys alone remain hostile

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and wish to throw back our new and better national existence into the old channels of strife.

IVAN. Are we the only ones? Reverend Father Dionisy! Tell him whether we stand alone in grieving for the state of Christ's Church!

DIONISY. Prince, before your arrival we were speaking with the imperial chancellor. He will repeal all the decrees which we objected to so strongly.

IVAN. I have my doubts.

GODUNOFF. As to the rest, Prince, I am confident that we shall agree. The time of strife ended to-day. We have smoothed out whatever obstacles there were between us in this land, and now you and I together can better serve it than I could by myself.

DIONISY. Your words are wise and peaceful. We advise an end to this hate which is against the teachings of Our Savior and harmful to the welfare of the nation.

FYODOR. Reverend Father, I am convinced that the Shouiskys will give in! Am I not right, Prince, am I not right? Even the Tsarina, I know, agrees with me. Why are you so silent, Irinushka?

IRINA [*continuing to embroider*] Really, I cannot believe that Prince Shouisky can allow himself to be coaxed so long into doing what the Tsar can command with one word. [*Looks at Shouisky*] Tell me, Prince, if you stood now before Tsar Ivan instead of before Tsar Fyodor, would you hesitate so long? Can it be that you are forgetting your duty to the Tsar because he is so lenient and patient and kindly?

IVAN. Tsarina, I spoke to the Tsar as I would have spoken to his father, and I would rather mount the scaffold than be untrue to my principles. I am certain, however, that I would never have had occasion to use such words before Tsar Ivan, since the late Tsar would

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never have permitted the imperial power to slip from his hands.

IRINA. Prince Ivan Petrovitch, when you were in Pskoff, surrounded by Lithuanians, and by your great bravery set an encouraging example to all Russia — I vowed then that, if you were saved, I would embroider in gold this cover for the sepulcher of Prince Vsevoloda's sacred remains in Pskoff. I have been embroidering for a long time, and my work is almost finished. Is it possible that I who began this in honor of the one who saved Russia, shall see him an enemy of the state, now that it is finished? [*Rises and crosses to Shouisky*] Is it possible that he for whose welfare I and all Russia prayed so fervently, will bring strife into this land by his stubbornness? I beg you — do not darken needlessly the glory of your fame with such a shadow! Obey the counsels of Holy Church and the Tsar's wishes! — Prince — [*Bows deeply to him*] See — I bend my knee before you — forget your enmity!

IVAN [*deeply moved*] Tsarina! Your words flow over my soul like a gentle brook! The unexpected kindliness of your speech stirred my heart to its depths! How can I refuse your appeal! Believe me, I am glad to comply with the Tsar's wishes. But, before doing so, permit me to say two words to your brother. [*To Godunoff*] It is not the first time, sir, that you evade your enemies through tricks and clever speeches. What guarantee can you give us that this is not a trap to lull our suspicions, so that later on you may destroy us the more easily?

GODUNOFF. Prince, mine own word and the Tsar's pledge will be your guarantee.

FYODOR. Yes, yes, Prince, I give you my pledge.

IVAN PETROVITCH. What fate awaits those who stood by us in defense of our faith?

GODUNOFF. Not one hair of their heads shall be

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touched, nor will a hand be raised against them in violence.

IVAN. And will you seal this promise by kissing the Holy Cross before the Tsar?

GODUNOFF. I will!

IVAN [*addressing the nobles who came with him*] What do you say?

NOBLES. We agree to whatever you propose!

IVAN [*to Godunoff*] Here is my hand!

FYODOR. My friends! Thanks, thanks! Irinushka, this is the happiest day of my life! Reverend Father Dionisy, bring the Cross — quick, quick!

[*Dionisy picks the Cross up from table and offers it first to Shouisky, then to Godunoff.*]

IVAN. I swear that from to-day on I shall not injure Boris Fyodorovitch Godunoff by deed or word; in witness of which, I, for myself as well as for my brothers, my clansmen, adherents, traders and merchants, kiss the Cross of Christ, Our Savior! [*Kisses the Cross.*]

GODUNOFF. I kiss the Cross in witness of the fact that from now on I shall live in peace and amity with the Shouiskys and that I shall hereafter in all matters pertaining to the State seek their advice; and as to their followers, princes, nobles, and merchants, I shall not take toll for whatever wrong they may have done me in the past. [*Kisses the Cross.*]

FYODOR. That's it! Thus should one live up to the lessons of the Holy Scriptures! Embrace each other! That's it! Well — has that not lessened the tension? Isn't it so? [*Loud voices outside*] What are the shouts about?

IVAN. Your Majesty, they probably wish to know the outcome of the meeting between the chancellor and myself. With your permission, I shall go and join them.

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FYODOR. No, no, remain here. Let them come in. Let them rejoice that harmony has been restored! [*To Kleshnin*] Go, Petrovitch, and bring them in!

KLESHNIN. All of them? There's a whole troop of counter-jumpers!

FYODOR. Why all of them? Let them delegate a few of their number and send them in! [*Kleshnin leaves*] To be frank, brother-in-law, I am not over-anxious to see them. They will surround me with their complaints and petitions, and I can't stand the noise — the zumming and droning — it always fills my ears like the clanging of cymbals. I cannot bear it! One stands and stares and does not know what to say. Still — to-day it is different! To-day I shall be glad to see them!

GODUNOFF. I am afraid, Your Majesty, that you will not be able to get rid of their importunate complaints. They are a troublesome lot. You had better permit me to speak to them.

KLESHNIN [*returning*] Your Majesty! Here are the delegates of all the merchants, grain-dealers, saddle-makers, weavers, and butchers whom Prince Shouisky brought along. Here they are!

THE DELEGATES [*enter and kneel*] Your Imperial Majesty! God bless you for bidding us come into your august presence!

FYODOR. Rise, men! I am glad to see you. I sent for you to tell you — why don't you rise? I am beginning to grow angry! [*The Delegates rise with the exception of one old man*] Why don't you get up, my friend?

THE OLD MAN. I would like to, Your Majesty, but I cannot! I can still manage to get down on my knees, but when it comes to getting up I have not enough strength. I am growing hopelessly stiff, Your Majesty!

FYODOR [*to the others*] Help him up, men! [*Two mer-*

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chants assist the old man to his feet] That's it! You have not strained yourself, grandfather? Who are you?

THE OLD MAN. I am Bogdan Semyonovitch Kuriukoff, a visitor from Moscow.

FYODOR. How old are you?

KURIUKOFF. I am getting on towards a hundred years! In the days of your mother, Alona Vassilievna, I was an employee of the mint, making kopeck pieces on which was embossed the likeness of the Imperial Prince. You see, already in those olden days I was an employee of the state! Yes, I am well over a hundred!

FYODOR. Why, grandfather, you are shaky! Gentlemen, you ought to bring him a chair!

KURIUKOFF. Your Majesty, how dare I sit down in your presence?

FYODOR. But you are so very old. I take it you have seen a great deal in your life.

KURIUKOFF. Why, Little Father, how could I help seeing things? To be sure — I have seen a bit of everything. I well remember the time when Vassily Ivanovitch put his wife, Solomona Yourievna, into a convent because she was sterile, and took your mother, Alona Vassilievna, to wife. Then, you see, the people divided into two factions, one siding with your mother, the other with Solomona Yourievna. In those days there were terrible quarrels between the nobles; at the time of your father's minority the Prince of Oftchin fought bitterly with the Shouiskys, involving in their feud all of Moscow. Our clan always sided with the Shouiskys. It has been a tradition with us. All of a sudden you would hear the alarm sounding — and then, off to arms! Rally around the Shouiskys! The stores would quickly put up their shutters; quickly would we pick up whatever weapon came first to hand, hatchet or pole-ax, and rush to the marketplace where the fight already would be in full swing, one

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side yelling: "Death to the Oftchins!", the other side: "Death to the Shouiskys!" And on with the fight!

FYODOR. It was a great sin, grandfather!

KURIUKOFF. Then, as soon as your father became of age and assumed the reins of authority, everything quieted down.

KLESHNIN. Well — he evidently never spoke in jest!

KURIUKOFF. God forbid! He was a very strict Tsar. He ruled the nobles with an iron fist! There was no trifling with him! Before you had time to think, the gallows would rise in the marketplace. Ah — there was punishment and suffering to spare! All of a sudden —

FYODOR. Grandfather, I asked you and your friends in to tell you —

KURIUKOFF. The tambourines would suddenly jingle, calling the people to the marketplace —

FYODOR. I asked you all in —

KURIUKOFF. In spite of everything you'd go —

A YOUNG MERCHANT [*pulling him by the coat*] Bogan Semyonovitch! The Tsar is speaking!

KURIUKOFF. Just a moment, nephew! Let me finish. We would come to the marketplace, and there —

FYODOR [*to the young merchant*] So you are his nephew?

THE YOUNG MERCHANT. Your Majesty, I am his grand-nephew —

KURIUKOFF. The executioners would already be waiting —

THE YOUNG MERCHANT [*again pulling his coat*] Bogdan Semyonovitch! What is the matter with you?

FYODOR [*to the young merchant*] Your face is familiar to me.

KURIUKOFF. With beheading axes —

FYODOR [*to the young merchant*] Where have I seen you?

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THE YOUNG MERCHANT. At Mikoll's, Almighty Tsar, we drank your health. There was a bear fight. I overpowered the bear, and Your Majesty was kind enough to treat me to a tumbler of wine.

KURIUKOFF. With beheading axes they waited —

FYODOR. What is the trouble, grandfather? What are you talking about? What is there to remember? With axes—with axes! You do not give me a chance to say one word! [*To the young merchant*] So you are the fellow who vanquished the bear? I remember, I remember now. Irinushka! This is the young merchant of whom I spoke to you, you know? I believe your name is Sinielnikoff, isn't it?

THE YOUNG MERCHANT. Krassilnikoff, Your Majesty, Ivan Artyomoff Krassilnikoff.

FYODOR. Yes, yes, yes! Krassilnikoff. Just imagine, Irinushka! The bear came close to him, as close as you are to me now, Reverend Father; and he stepped forward this way, whirled his ax, and with one blow drove it into the bear's stomach! The bear struggles and screams "Ooh! Oooh!" And he kept on pawing him, Reverend Father, until his strength gave out and he tumbled over.

GODUNOFF. Your Majesty, you wish to announce our reconciliation to these people.

FYODOR [*to Krassilnikoff*] Didn't you also have a brother who beat Shakhovskoy in a fist fight?

KRASSILNIKOFF. He is my cousin, Your Majesty. His name is Nikita Golub. [*Turning to his people*] Nikita! Come here and present yourself to the Tsar!

[*Golub Junior steps forward and bows*].

FYODOR. Good day, Golub! How are you? How are your muscles, my boy? [*To Shakhovskoy*] Did you recognize him, Prince?

SHAKHOVSKOY. Would I fail to recognize such a

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friend? Why, Golub, you gave one of my ribs a neat little fracture. And thanks to your gentle treatment I was in bed three weeks.

GOLUB JUNIOR [*bowing*] I respectfully greet you, Prince Grigory! God willing, we shall meet by the river next Easter, and then perhaps it will be your turn to beat me.

SHAKHOVSKOY. I shall always be glad to take you on for a bout — mark my word!

GOLUB JUNIOR. What will you stake on the outcome, Prince?

SHAKHOVSKOY. An embossed punch ladle! And you?

GOLUB JUNIOR. A sable cap!

IRINA [*to Fyodor*] Darling, do not allow them to fight. The time is not propitious. It may lead to evil consequences!

FYODOR. You think so, Irinushka! [*To Shakhovskoy and Golub Junior*] Mind you don't fight seriously. And be careful not to hit each other below the belt! It is the deadliest spot.

IVAN. Almighty Tsar, permit me to inform them why you bade them come.

FYODOR. Well, well, all right — tell them.

IVAN. Delegates! I wish to inform you that the noble Boris Fyodorovitch Godunoff and I, Prince Shouisky, together with my brothers, have made peace, and have faithfully promised each other to forget the ancient enmity between our clans and ourselves and to live from now on in perfect peace and harmony!

GOLUB SENIOR. Prince Ivan Petrovitch, how is that? We sided with you, and you deserted us?

IVAN. I did not desert you! The chancellor has promised not to make a single move in the future without me, and I, as you know, shall always defend your interests!

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KRASSILNIKOFF. Prince, take care!

GOLUB JUNIOR. Prince, do not make peace!

GOLUB SENIOR. Prince Ivan Petrovitch, do not betray us!

IVAN. Do not be afraid, my people! The chancellor has given his solemn vow that he will not touch a hair on our heads!

A VOICE [*in the background*] He will give his vow — yes! But will he keep it?

KURIUKOFF. Permit an old man, Ivan Petrovitch, to give you one warning in his own homely way! When your forefathers at the time of Alona Vassilievna, the Tsar's mother, bade us rise in the Telepnia-Oftchin feud, we were stout allies; and in this lay the strength of your grandfather, Vassily Vassilitch! Had he concluded peace with the Oftchins he would have perished, and we with him!

GOLUB SENIOR. There was no need to inflame us against your enemies, if you intended making peace with them, Prince Ivan Petrovitch!

GOLUB JUNIOR. Prince Ivan Petrovitch! You are concluding peace at the price of our heads!

IVAN [*angrily*] Be quiet, young dog! Go on with your fist-fighting, and let older and wiser men attend to matters of state! How dare you doubt his word when he kissed the Cross? Do you hear? He kissed the Cross!

GODUNOFF [*in whisper to Kleshnin*] Take note of their names and write them down.

[*In the meantime the Delegates, who have been conversing among themselves, approach Fyodor in a body*].

DELEGATES. Almighty Tsar! Be merciful! Do not let us perish! Almighty Tsar, be merciful! Protect us! Be merciful, Your Majesty! Do not forsake us! We are lost now.

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FYODOR. Why? What is the matter? What makes you say that? Against whom do you want me to protect you?

GOLUB SENIOR. Against your brother-in-law, Your Majesty! Against Godunoff!

GOLUB JUNIOR. Your brother-in-law will ruin us now completely!

FYODOR. What nonsense! Who told you? My brother-in-law loves you! Tell them, Boris, that you love them! He will tell you so at once! He will explain everything to you! I personally have not the time now! [*Attempts to leave; the Delegates surround him*].

DELEGATES. Almighty Tsar! Our only hope rests in you! We have done no harm! We were faithful allies of the Shouiskys, your own servants! Command Boris Fyodorovitch not to harm us! Order him!

FYODOR. Yes, all right! Now let me go! I have no time! Tell Boris everything, everything!

DELEGATES. Why, Your Majesty, how can we speak to Boris against his own self? Have mercy on us! Listen to us, Tsar! Permit us —

FYODOR [*putting his hands over his ears*] Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh! Tell Boris everything! Tell Boris! I have no time to listen! Tell Boris everything!

[*Fyodor leaves, his hands over his ears. The Delegates look at one another in complete consternation*].

CURTAIN

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ACT THREE.

SCENE I.

Night. The garden of Ivan's house.

VASSILISA VOLOKHOVA [*coming out of the house*] What a dark night! Not a star to be seen! It is time for him to come! I wonder if that is not he standing there back of the fence. [*Walks to the gate and speaks in a whisper*] Prince! Prince! There is no one! Listen, isn't he coming? Those cursed nightingales with their noisy twitter make it impossible to hear if he is coming. I can't hear a thing! Something creaked! It's he, probably!

VOLOKHOVA [*turns around and speaks in a whisper*] Princess, — come — come!

PRINCESS [*in whisper*] Where are you, Vassilisa Pankratievna?

VOLOKHOVA. Here, darling.

PRINCESS. I cannot see you.

VOLOKHOVA. Here, come over here! Give me your hand! Why, little dove, how you tremble!

PRINCESS. It is chilly.

VOLOKHOVA. Why — no! It is quite warm. Smell the grass! And — oh — the scent of birch and ash-trees that drifts across the meadows from the monastery! What a glorious spring night! But your little hand is like ice!

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PRINCESS. I had better go home!

VOLOKHOVA. Blessed Virgin! What are you afraid of? Is he a stranger to you? Why — thank God — I myself brought you together!

PRINCESS. Uncle's house is filled with guests. What if one of them should stroll through the garden?

VOLOKHOVA. What of it? Why should an engaged couple not be seen together? If after you are married you should want to become acquainted with some nice young lad, that would have to be done very circumspectly. By the way, that is not so very unusual either. For a handful of gold coins anything can be done.

PRINCESS. Stop, Vassilisa Pankratievna! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

VOLOKHOVA. Why should I be ashamed of myself, little dove? Everything depends on money. For money girls marry, and men. For money brother fights brother and son fights father. No one can withstand it.

PRINCESS. Pankratievna! One moment! Didn't you hear something?

VOLOKHOVA. It sounds like a wind-mill —

SHAKHOVSKOY [*behind the fence, in an undertone*] Ho!

VOLOKHOVA. Well — at last! [*Runs to the gate and opens it*] Come in, Prince! [*Shakhovskoy is seen behind the fence, then leaps across it into the garden*] Well — I declare! I opened the gate for you — why jump?

SHAKHOVSKOY. Bah — the gate! I am only sorry that the fence is so low. Why — I would leap the Kremlin walls to rush to the arms of my love. I am here at last!

[*About to put his arms around the Princess*].

VOLOKHOVA. That's right! Kiss her! Caress her, while I hold her hands.

SHAKHOVSKOY [*receding a few steps*] Do not be

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afraid, Princess! I will not approach you until you permit me to do so.

VOLOKHOVA. Ah — my hawk-like Prince! I have kept my word! And you — what you promised me —

SHAKHOVSKOY [*throwing his purse to her*] Here you are!

VOLOKHOVA [*weighing the purse*] Heavens! How the coins clink! Too bad it is so dark!

SHAKHOVSKOY [*to Princess*] Why did you turn away from me? Do you not care for me?

PRINCESS. You kept me waiting.

SHAKHOVSKOY. Were you frightened?

PRINCESS. Terribly frightened! On such a night!

SHAKHOVSKOY. Afraid of storms?

PRINCESS. And what about goblins? Or what-not? And there he stands and laughs!

SHAKHOVSKOY. How can I help laughing? Goblins in a garden!

PRINCESS. Yes, it seems funny to you, but how about me? What if suddenly my uncle or brother should come out — what then? You would be lost!

SHAKHOVSKOY. How can I help myself since they do not let me be with you? Occasionally I have a glimpse of you, but never a chance for a word.

PRINCESS. Just listen to him! And what would you like to say to me?

SHAKHOVSKOY. That you are the most lovely in all the world! That without you life would mean nothing to me! That I can hardly wait until we are married!

PRINCESS. Well — and what if my brother had refused your proposal for my hand?

SHAKHOVSKOY. Then I would have taken you away!

PRINCESS. And what if I hadn't come with you?

SHAKHOVSKOY. I would have kidnapped you!

PRINCESS. And if I had escaped?

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SHAKHOVSKOY. I would have caught you!

PRINCESS. And if I had jumped into the river at Moscow.

SHAKHOVSKOY. I would have jumped after you!

PRINCESS. And what if the water-sprite had defended me?

SHAKHOVSKOY. I would have caught him by his beard and his walrus mustache!

PRINCESS. Ha-ha. His walrus mustache! [*Both laugh.*]

SHAKHOVSKOY. Why — you're laughing! And your laughter — oh — is just like the twitter of the nightingales! My darling! When you laugh it seems as if the veil of night were lifted from this garden. Look yonder — a star has appeared — another — a third — still more! They all came to listen to you! They are shining in the pond! Take care — they'll tell the water-sprite how you laugh at him!

PRINCESS. Ha-ha!

SHAKHOVSKOY. There she goes!

[*A knock at the gate*].

PRINCESS. Oh — what is it?

VOLOKHOVA. Some one is knocking at the gate.

[*She and the Princess hide behind the trees.*]

SHAKHOVSKOY [*goes to gate*] Who is it?

VOICE [*outside*] Let me in — for God's sake!

SHAKHOVSKOY. Who is it?

VOICE. I! Krassilnikoff, a merchant! A terrible thing has happened! Let me in — quickly!

[*Shakhovskoy opens the gate — Krassilnikoff rushes in. His clothes are torn.*]

KRASSILNIKOFF. Where is Prince Shouisky? Where is Prince Ivan Petrovitch?

SHAKHOVSKOY. What do you want him for?

KRASSILNIKOFF. Prince — Prince Ivan Petrovitch!

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[*Lights spring up in the windows of the house. Prince Ivan Petrovitch and his guests come down the steps into the garden. Shakkovskoy disappears behind the trees.*]

IVAN. What's all this noise? Who called me?

KRASSILNIKOFF. I did. Almighty Prince, have mercy! Befriend us! Archers came to our house, the Nogaieffs' and the Golubs' — they broke in — and arrested all those who were delegates at the Tsar's audience!

IVAN. Who arrested them?

KRASSILNIKOFF. Kleshnin — by order of Godunoff.

IVAN. What?

KRASSILNIKOFF. I myself just escaped!

IVAN. By order of Godunoff?

KRASSILNIKOFF. Yes.

IVAN. You actually mean to tell me that Godunoff had all the delegates arrested?

KRASSILNIKOFF. So Kleshnin told us — let this be a lesson to you about complaining of Godunoff to the Tsar!

GOLOVIN. What did I tell you, Prince? You see?

VASSILY SHOUISKY. You see, uncle? You did not wish to believe it? You would not take our advice and would not plead illness when the Tsar asked you to the audience!

IVAN. It cannot be — it cannot be!

KRASSILNIKOFF. Prince-Protector! People came to our houses to find out what happened.

IVAN. He shall pay for this dearly!

GOLOVIN. First the merchants, and then — you just watch — and it will be our turn!

ANDREI SHOUISKY. Conscienceless wretch!

MSTISLAVSKY. The brute!

IVAN. He swore on the Cross — the Holy Cross!

ANDREI SHOUISKY. No wonder he maneuvered this; he wished to separate us from our people!

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VASSILY SHOUISKY. He wished to show all Moscow that people cannot rely upon us nor trust us, that we betray our allies!

IVAN. I suppose they are murmuring about us already!

KRASSILNIKOFF. Yes. Do not be angry, gentlemen, but as soon as the sleighs carried off our people, the neighbors gathered — and they did not speak kindly of you.

IVAN IVANOVITCH SHOUISKY. There are no two ways about it. We must arouse Moscow before we lose all our followers.

ANDREI SHOUISKY. We must send the alarm to all the suburbs.

IVAN IVANOVITCH SHOUISKY. Weapons must be distributed amongst the merchants!

ANDREI SHOUISKY. On — to Boris' house — and kill him!

GOLOVIN. We must send a messenger to Uglitch and tell the Nagis to proclaim Dimitry emperor at once! The Nagis and their Uglitch followers must start for Moscow immediately!

IVAN [*severely*] Be quiet!

VASSILY SHOUISKY [*to Golovin*] You are talking nonsense!

GOLOVIN. I have communicated with the Nagis. They are merely awaiting our signal.

IVAN. You dared write to them? You dared instigate the people of Uglitch against the Tsar? You should pay for this with your head!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Uncle! He shall answer for his own guilt. But this is not the time for us to quarrel.

GOLOVIN. Almighty Prince, I stand guilty before you. But my guilt has become useful. In spite of everything we shall have to call the Tsarievitch to mount the throne.

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VASSILY SHOUISKY [*to Golovin*] You are courting misfortune, my friend.

DIMITRY SHOUISKY. Moscow must be aroused!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Oh — is that so — must Moscow be aroused — really? And what for, pray? Let us go to the Tsar as we decided yesterday, and demand that he divorce his wife.

DIMITRY SHOUISKY. It is too late. Yesterday His Holiness was our ally. To-day he has made peace with Boris. Yesterday the merchants trusted us. They no longer do to-day.

ANDREI SHOUISKY. Kill him!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Yes — what a chance! He has doubled his bodyguard by now! [*Takes out of his pocket written documents*] Here are the signatures of His Holiness and the other clerics. And here are the signatures of all the nobles and all the merchants. They have all committed themselves — and now they cannot recede, no matter how much they desire to.

DIMITRY SHOUISKY. Do you imagine you can threaten Boris by showing him this document?

VASSILY SHOUISKY. It would be quite useless to show it to him. He is like a bullet in a gun, no longer dangerous after it has been discharged! We can arouse all the people against Boris if such is our intent.

ANDREI SHOUISKY. It would be best to kill him!

IVAN. You all talk like madmen! Why should we separate the Tsar from the Tsarina? And why should we kill Boris? He betrayed himself by this double-dealing! He saved us the trouble of groping for shady means! And now — the Lord be praised! — we can destroy him with clean heart and hands!

DIMITRY SHOUISKY. What do you propose to do?

IVAN. We should go to the Tsar and convict the betrayer!

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VASSILY SHOUISKY. It would be labor lost, uncle. The Tsar will believe whatever Godunoff says.

IVAN. The Tsar witnessed the oath! Every one witnessed it! Godunoff has no way to clear himself! [*To Krassilnikoff*] Go, tell the merchants that the Tsar has ordered the release of their delegates, and that Boris will be dismissed this very day! [*A bell chimes*] It is dawn! I shall go at once to the Tsar. I shall have to say but a few words. The lie is so evident. And when the sun rises in the East, Godunoff will be disgraced! [*Leaves. Krassilnikoff leaves, too. Silence.*]

DIMITRY SHOUISKY. Well, gentlemen?

IVAN IVANOVITCH SHOUISKY. I doubt much good will come of it.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Good? Well, hardly! He will return no wiser than he left. We are only losing time.

ANDREI SHOUISKY [*to Vassily*] Why did you not stop him, then?

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Whom? Uncle? You do not know him, evidently. Once he gets an idea into his head you cannot budge it. He reasons like a child. He says to himself that the very fact of his being right convicts the one who is wrong.

IVAN IVANOVITCH SHOUISKY. What can we do? Let us wait till he returns. Then let us go ahead with this appeal as we intended. If we could only find a suitable Tsarina, we could insert her name.

MSTISLAVSKY. Prince Ivan Petrovitch intended consulting His Holiness on the subject.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. He did not have time to do it. They called him to the Tsar in order to make peace. We must find a suitable Tsarina before he returns, so that he need not worry about it.

MSTISLAVSKY. She must appeal to the Tsar; and, too, be one of us. Of such there are few.

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VASSILY SHOUISKY. I know of one.

MSTISLAVSKY. Who? Speak!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Why — your own sister!

MSTISLAVSKY. Natasha? What are you talking about? Have you forgotten? She is engaged to Shakhovskoy!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Engaged — not married! Listen, Prince — our enterprise is not a jest. Everything depends upon the Tsarina's kin. Are we certain that the new Tsarina's clan will be allied to us? Your sister, however, is one of us.

MSTISLAVSKY. True enough! No one is better suited than she. I myself thought of it already, and had we not given our word . . .

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Prince! Don't I know how you gave your word? Shakhovskoy, that empty-headed ruffian, is not to your liking! He took you and your uncle unawares; he put on his best manners, bowed very low, made a great show of his friendship for you, swept your uncle off his feet — and you never said a word!

ANDREI SHOUISKY. I also said — why the hurry? Thank God, Natasha can wait.

IVAN IVANOVITCH SHOUISKY. It was Prince Ivan who settled too quickly.

MSTISLAVSKY. Yes, he was in too much of a hurry. Natasha could have been Tsarina.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. And if she were Tsarina you would be the Tsar's brother-in-law, only rather more honorable than Godunoff.

MSTISLAVSKY. Yes — more honorable.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Then what is the difficulty?

MSTISLAVSKY. If only we had not given our word . . .

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Don't you let that worry you! Your word — really — as if you had not given us your

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word that no matter what happens, you would snatch the power from Boris' hands and give it to us!

MSTISLAVSKY. How can I refuse him?

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Pick a quarrel with him!

MSTISLAVSKY. What will uncle say?

VASSILY SHOUISKY. He will return furious, because he will have failed with the Tsar, and he will be glad to make his niece Tsarina.

IVAN IVANOVITCH SHOUISKY. That is right. He would never break his promise of his own accord. But should you two quarrel there will be no time to find out who is right and who is wrong.

DIMITRY. And if Natasha is to be Tsarina we must hurry.

GOLOVIN [*to Vassily*] Pardon me, Prince Vassily Ivanovitch —— [*He takes the same document, and while the others are conversing, he takes out of his belt a pen and ink-well and writes something on the paper.*]

VASSILY SHOUISKY [*to Mstislavsky*] Make up your mind, Prince!

MSTISLAVSKY. If I could find a pretext for a quarrel!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Would you consent then?

MSTISLAVSKY. Surely!

SHAKHOVSKOY [*appears suddenly*] Prince! Why not ask me first whether I am willing to relinquish my fiancée to some one else?

ALL. Where does he come from? How dared he hide here?

[*The Princess screams*].

MSTISLAVSKY. That was my sister screaming! They were here together! [*He walks off into the garden, and comes back leading the Princess by the hand. Volokhova appears*] And here is the match-maker! Were you helping them?

VOLOKHOVA. Have mercy! What are you saying?

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We just came down for a walk — and all of a sudden he jumped over the fence. Really! Really!

MSTISLAVSKY. So that is the way, little sister, in which you preserve our honor? Prince Grigory, this is a bad deed! I take back my promise!

SHAKHOVSKOY. You propose to give my fiancée in marriage to the Tsar, do you? Take care, Prince! It shall not be as long as I am alive!

VOLOKHOVA [*stepping on Shakhovskoy's foot*] And why should it not be? Just look how excited he is! Just because he is engaged! Tsar Fyodor Ivanovitch is a better match than you! Scoundrel! Brute! Blackguard! Thief!

SHAKHOVSKOY. Begone, witch, begone! Step aside, everybody! Princess! Come to me! She is mine, before God! — I shall marry you at once — the first one of you who . . . [*He takes out his dagger.*]

ALL. Sheathe your dagger!

VASSILY SHOUISKY [*to Mstislavsky*] What a fiancé Natasha has! He raises his hand against his own flesh and blood!

MSTISLAVSKY. Sister, come to me! You heard me, Prince. Go away! Our covenant is broken!

ALL. Prince, do not be a fool! Go! You heard him! A brother has jurisdiction over his sister.

SHAKHOVSKOY. That remains to be seen! Princess, tell me — do you really wish to be mine?

MSTISLAVSKY. Be silent, sister!

PRINCESS. Oh — God!

SHAKHOVSKOY. Princess! Will you submit to a forced marriage with the Tsar?

PRINCESS. No, no! I long to be yours! yours!

SHAKHOVSKOY. Then come with me!

MSTISLAVSKY [*to his sister*] Not a step.

SHAKHOVSKOY. Come with me!

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PRINCESS. I am helpless! Don't you see?

GOLOVIN [*to Shakhovskoy*] Prince, give in. You gain nothing by obstinacy. Everything between you and them is at an end! Or do you perchance imagine that Ivan Petrovitch will forgive you for what you have done today? Everything is over. [*Shows him the document*] Look! Princess Mstislavskaya's name has been written here!

VASSILY SHOUISKY [*to himself*] Ah — What a clever rogue!

GOLOVIN. According to this document you yourself have agreed to be our ally! You cannot break your word now!

SHAKHOVSKOY [*tearing the paper out of Golovin's hands*] Give it to me!

GOLOVIN. Stop! What is the matter with you? Stop!

SHAKHOVSKOY. It is in my hands now!

ALL. Hold him!

SHAKHOVSKOY [*threatening them with his dagger*] Stand back! I shall kill the first man who steps forward! I am going straight to the Tsarina with this convicting evidence! [*Runs away with the document.*]

SCENE II.

Tsar Fyodor's study. Enter Godunoff accompanied by the Deacon who puts on the table a sheaf of papers and two imperial seals, one large, the other small. Through another door comes Kleshnin.

GODUNOFF [*to Kleshnin*] Have you attended to everything?

KLESHNIN. Everything, sir. We arrested them in

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their homes before daybreak. If only they would send us the written evidence from Uglitch!

GODUNOFF. You will give it to me as soon as it arrives here. [*Kleshnin leaves; enter Irina*] Sister Tsarina, good morning! Has not the Tsar arisen yet?

IRINA. A short time ago the chaplain went to his bedroom with an ikon.

[*Enter Fyodor through another door, followed by the chaplain who carries an ikon.*]

FYODOR. Good morning, Irinushka! Good morning, brother-in-law! I actually overslept and missed the morning service. I had such an unpleasant dream. It seemed to me that again I made peace between you, Boris, and Ivan Shouisky. He seemed to offer you his hand, and you did likewise. But instead of shaking his hand you seized him by the throat, and began choking him — then there was chaos. Tartars attacked us all of a sudden, and some terrible bears came and clawed us. I was saved by the Reverend Father Iona. Well, Reverend Chaplain, is this dream a sinful one?

CHAPLAIN. No. It is not sinful. But just the same it is a dream of ill omen.

FYODOR. I also dreamed of brother Dimitry, and he was crying. And something dreadful happened to him, but what I cannot remember.

CHAPLAIN. Tsar, you must pray more fervently before you go to sleep!

FYODOR. Brr! What an unpleasant dream! [*Notices the papers on the table*] And what is this, pray? Are you going to bother me again, brother-in-law?

GODUNOFF. I shall not detain you very long, Your Majesty. I merely need your consent for a few things.

FYODOR. Can't you settle these matters without me? I do not feel quite well.

GODUNOFF. Two words only!

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FYODOR. Father Chaplain, put to-day's ikon Saint on the shelf, and keep yesterday's until next year. Who is to-morrow's Saint?

CHAPLAIN. Saint John the Hermit.

FYODOR. I shall re-read his life in the Book of the Saints. If only Boris will let me off! Now give me your blessing, and I shall attend to business. [*The Chaplain gives him his blessing and leaves. Fyodor sits down. Godunoff presents the papers to him*] Well, brother-in-law, what have you there? Come, give it to me.

GODUNOFF [*takes a few sheets from the sheaf*] The Ukrainian chiefs are writing us that the chief of the Tartars is again driving his horde northward.

FYODOR. Why — that is my dream, word for word! All we need now is that you should start to choke Shouisky!

GODUNOFF [*spreading the papers out before him*] Here, Your Majesty, are the instructions to our captains.

FYODOR. Seal them!

[*Godunoff hands the papers to the Deacon who puts the imperial seal on them. Godunoff gives another paper to the Tsar.*]

GODUNOFF. And this, Your Majesty, is an appeal from the Tsar of Iver who begs you to take him under your protection.

FYODOR. The Tsar of Iver? Where is his country?

GODUNOFF. It is bordered by the kingdom of the Kizilbash tribesmen, and it is rich in cereals, silks, wine, and expensive horses of fine lineage.

FYODOR. And he appeals to me? You heard, Irinushka? You heard? What an extraordinary fellow! What has entered his head?

GODUNOFF. The Shah of Persia and the Turkish Sultan are worrying him.

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FYODOR. Poor Fellow! Is he a Christian?

GODUNOFF. Yes.

FYODOR. Well, then, let us immediately declare him our subject! And, do you know, brother-in-law, we ought to see about a gift for him. Irinushka, what could we send him?

GODUNOFF. Before we do anything else, I would suggest that we proclaim this document throughout Moscow.

FYODOR. Very well — go ahead and seal it. [*Deacon seals it*] And what is this?

GODUNOFF. These are instructions to Prince Troiekuroff for his course with the Polish Diet when they elect their King. You know, Your Majesty, that through your generosity and since the death of Batur, a great many Polish nobles have become your friends and stand ready to make you their King.

FYODOR. I? No, no, brother-in-law! What can I do with Poland's crown? I have enough worries of my own. What next? And what has got into all these people? Here is that Tsar of Iver making me a present of his land, and there are the Polish barons trying to force their Kingdom on me! Well and good — the Tsar of Iver at least is a Tsar. But the Poles are Catholics, foes of Russia!

GODUNOFF. That is just why you should not reject their offer, Your Majesty. Thus can you make faithful subjects from former enemies.

FYODOR. Do you think so? All right. Seal it. Now then — is this all?

GODUNOFF. Here are the appeals of two noblemen who during your father's reign ran away to Lithuania. They are asking your permission to return.

FYODOR. Who is preventing them? They are welcome. Do I understand that a great number of them ran away? My opinion, brother-in-law, is as follows:

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We should make Russia so pleasant that people would not prefer living abroad. Then there will be no reason for their running away from us. Do you know what? You ought to write to all of our subjects who are in Lithuania that I will give money and land to all who wish to return.

GODUNOFF. I was thinking of it, Your Majesty, and have already prepared a document to that effect.

FYODOR. Very well. Seal that, too! Is that all?

GODUNOFF. That is all, Your Majesty.

[*The Deacon takes the seals, gathers all the documents, and leaves.*]

FYODOR. Well, brother-in-law, I will not detain you any longer. And I wish that you, Irinushka, would open the book of the Saints and read to me the life of Saint John the Hermit.

IRINA. Permit me, Fyodor, to show you first an appeal. I have received a letter from Uglitch from the widowed Tsarina Maria Fyodorovna. With tears she implores you to permit her to return to Moscow with her son, Dimitry.

FYODOR. Why — Irinushka! You know yourself that I have been asking Boris this very thing for a long time. I would be glad . . .

IRINA. Just as you pardoned those refugee nobles in Lithuania, so I thought that you might permit your step-brother and your step-mother to return.

FYODOR. Irinushka, my dear, it would make me happy to have them come back. [*pointing to Godunoff*] Tell it to him!

IRINA. I know, Fyodor, that you wisely entrusted my brother with the management of the Kingdom. None knows more about statecraft than he. But this is not an affair of statecraft. This is your private family matter. And you alone should be the judge.

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FYODOR. Boris, you heard what she said? It is the truth. You actually do not allow me to take a single independent step. What are things coming to? I wish to have Dimitry return. You know when I take this tone, I never reconsider my word.

GODUNOFF [*to Irina*] Sister, you interfered unwisely in a matter which you do not understand. [*To Fyodor*] The Tsarievitch cannot be brought back.

FYODOR. What? What? Have I not told you that I want him back?

GODUNOFF. Permit me, Your Majesty . . .

FYODOR. No. This is too much! I am not a child! It is . . . [*Begins to pace up and down the room.*]

STEWARD [*opening the door*] Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky!

GODUNOFF [*to steward*] His Majesty cannot receive him to-day.

FYODOR. Who told you so? Let him come in! [*Continues to pace up and down*] I am not even allowed to be master in my own house! [*Enter Ivan*] Good morning, Prince! Thank you for coming. You are just the man I want to see — I want to talk to you about my brother, Dimitry.

IVAN. Your Majesty, I, too, have wished to speak to you for a long time about the Tsarievitch Dimitry. But first I must tell you about your brother-in-law.

FYODOR. What? About Boris?

IVAN. Yes.

FYODOR. What has he done?

IVAN. He has broken his oath.

FYODOR. What are you saying, Prince?

IVAN. Your Majesty, you heard how he swore not to lay a finger on my adherents?

FYODOR. Of course I did. Well — ?

IVAN. This very evening he had the merchants whom

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you received in audience arrested and sent nobody knows where.

FYODOR. One moment, one moment! There is something wrong here.

IVAN. Ask him!

FYODOR. Is it true, brother-in-law?

GODUNOFF. Yes.

IRINA. Why — brother?

FYODOR. Are you not afraid of God, brother-in-law, that you could do such a thing?

GODUNOFF. I found that it was inadvisable to leave them in Moscow.

FYODOR. And what about your oath?

GODUNOFF. I swore not to punish them for past deeds, and I did not! They were to-day arrested because after we made peace, they tried again to stir up strife between the Shouiskys and myself, and you yourself witnessed it, Your Majesty!

FYODOR. That is not true. But even so you should not . . .

GODUNOFF. I am surprised that Prince Ivan Petrovitch is siding with those who attempted so shamelessly to disrupt our new-found peace.

IVAN. And I am surprised, sir, that you dare try to justify yourself by such a sinful lie! Your Majesty! Was there not mocking laughter in his heart, laughter at you and me, yesterday when he kissed the Blessed Cross that was in His Holiness' hands?

FYODOR. No, brother-in-law, no! You did not act right! We did not thus interpret your words!

IVAN. Your Majesty, what will all Russia think of you when they hear that he trampled under foot his oath which you sanctified?

FYODOR. This shall not happen! The merchants shall be released at once.

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IVAN. Is that all, Your Majesty? And he who deceived you and who made me appear dishonest before the whole nation, will he continue to manage the affairs of the country as previously?

FYODOR. One moment, Prince. . . . There was no deception here. . . . You merely misunderstood each other. . . . And, besides, you have already agreed that you and he will share in the discussion of matters of state.

IVAN. He gave oath to that effect. With this understanding I gave him my hand. But you see yourself how he has kept his oath! Almighty Tsar, beware of him! Do not entrust him with the rule of the land nor with affairs of your own family! You wished to speak to me about your brother. Do you know whom he sent to Uglitch with your brother? Do you know who he is? He is a traitor! And a thief! He is a perjurer who was saved from the gallows by Godunoff. Do not let the successor to the throne remain in such hands!

FYODOR. No, no, Prince, rest assured regarding this matter. I have already told Boris that I want Dimitry here with me.

GODUNOFF. And I replied to His Majesty that he must remain in Uglitch.

FYODOR. What? You are arguing again?

GODUNOFF. Your Majesty, permit me to tell you. . . .

FYODOR. No, I shall not permit you! Am I Tsar or am I not?

GODUNOFF. Permit me to explain to you. . . . Please listen! . . .

FYODOR. I do not wish to listen. Am I Tsar or am I not? Am I Tsar or am I not?

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GODUNOFF. You are the Tsar. . . .

FYODOR. Enough! That is all! You heard, Irina? You heard, Prince? He has admitted that I am Tsar! He can argue no longer. Hereafter he will remain silent! [*To Godunoff*] Do you know what a Tsar is? Do you know? Do you remember my father, the late Tsar? You, you . . . do not worry, Prince. I shall have Dimitry come here from Uglitch. Also my step-mother and her brothers — I shall send for them all! What does this mean, anyhow? What is it? He is making me feverish! Just look, Irina! [*Walks about the room, and stops in front of Shouisky and Godunoff*] Now, then, since I made peace between you, compose your anger! Come, Prince. Come, brother-in-law! That is enough! Kiss each other! Come!

IVAN. Almighty Tsar! I cannot understand you! You saw, you heard from his own lips that he is playing with his oath! You yourself countermanded his last deed. You agreed that your brother must not remain in the hands of his companion! On the other hand, you leave the kingdom in his hands? Almighty Tsar — either one of two things! Either I am a cheat and then you must punish me for deceiving you — or you must dismiss Godunoff for treason!

FYODOR. Why — I have already made him apologize to you for his wrongs. What more do you desire? Nothing pleases him! Did you hear, Irina?

IRINA. Prince Ivan Petrovitch, it seems to me . . .

GODUNOFF. Let him alone, sister! I myself shall rid the Tsar of the difficulty of deciding between him and me. Almighty Tsar! As long as you trusted me, I was useful to you. Now that you trust me no longer, I am worthless to you. Prince Shouisky told the truth: one of us must give up his privileges. You yourself made the choice, Your Majesty, when you listened to his

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accusations with such kindly patience, while you cut me short. Permit me to resign.

FYODOR. What is the matter? What is the matter?

GODUNOFF. To whom, Your Majesty, do you command me to transfer my office?

FYODOR. Why — you misunderstood me! Heavens! See what you have done, Prince!

GODUNOFF. No, Your Majesty, I understand your wishes. You wish to recall the very people whom I sent away in order to keep peace in the city. You wish to bring to Moscow the Nagis and the Tsarievitch, although there are grave reasons why they should remain in Uglitch. Since such is your decision, Almighty Tsar, it must be carried out. But I refuse the responsibility!

FYODOR. I did not know, Boris, that there were such important reasons. Since you . . .

IVAN. With your permission, Almighty Tsar! [*Turns to leave.*]

FYODOR. Prince! Prince! Where are you going?

IVAN. I am going away because I do not wish to see my Tsar bring disgrace upon himself.

FYODOR. Well, Prince! We will settle everything. . . .

IVAN. Fyodor Ivanitch, Emperor of All the Russias! I feel ashamed of you — forgive me! [*Leaves.*]

FYODOR. Prince! Prince! Oh, God — he is gone! And this one proposes to leave me! Brother-in-law! You . . . you were jesting! What is going to happen to my country?

GODUNOFF. Almighty Tsar, how can I serve you if you tie my hands?

FYODOR. No, brother-in-law, no! Well — then? Do you consent? Yes, brother-in-law, yes?

GODUNOFF. Given this provision, Almighty Tsar, I

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agree. But remember that only thus can I continue to serve you.

FYODOR. Thank you, brother-in-law, thank you! Do you know — now we should pacify Shouisky! Why, he misunderstood you. I, too, misunderstood you yesterday.

[*Enter Kleshnin, hands Godunoff some papers and leaves. Godunoff looks them over and gives them to Fyodor.*]

GODUNOFF. Your Majesty, first read this report from Uglitch, and a secret letter written to the Nagis by Mikhailo Golovin, an ally of the Shouiskys. Bitiagovsky sent it here by messenger.

FYODOR [*reading the paper*] Well, what of it? "In a drunken condition abusive language is often heard. . . ." Well — is there any one who does not use abusive language when he is drunk? "Money is being extorted through threats —" Perhaps you did not assign them enough, brother-in-law. You know, they are more accustomed to live under my father's rule. You should give them more. Well — what else? "And they boast that with the help of the Shouiskys — a Tsar . . ." Why, it is impossible!

GODUNOFF. Read over Golovin's letter!

FYODOR [*reads, mumbling to himself, stops and shakes his head*] Drive me from the throne? God! Why can't they wait a little? Every one knows that I cannot live forever — to wit, the fact that I have a pain in my side! If only they could give Dimitry a chance to grow up! How gladly I would relinquish the throne to him! On the other hand, if they now depose me by force and suddenly put a minor on the throne, there would have to be a regent, chaos, confusion, ruin throughout the empire — that will not do!

GODUNOFF. Now you see, Your Majesty, why the Nagis cannot be permitted to return to Moscow.

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FYODOR. This will not do!

GODUNOFF. You are thinking about it too impersonally, while great danger threatens the nation. There is no time to lose. We must settle this matter in a drastic way.

FYODOR. What matter, brother-in-law?

GODUNOFF. Your Majesty, from Golovin's letter you can see that the Shouiskys have opened negotiations with the Nagis. You must order immediately that the Shouiskys be closely watched.

FYODOR. Watched? What? Ivan Petrovitch watched? And then what?

GODUNOFF. And then, if he cannot clear himself, he must be . . .

FYODOR. What must he be?

GODUNOFF. Executed!

FYODOR. What? Prince Ivan Petrovitch? The one who was here a short while ago? The one with whom I shook hands just now?

GODUNOFF. Yes, Your Majesty.

FYODOR. The one between whom and you I made peace yesterday?

GODUNOFF. That very man!

FYODOR. He? Executed with his brothers?

GODUNOFF. With all those who are implicated in this treason!

FYODOR. And what about the Nagis?

GODUNOFF. Without the Shouiskys, Your Majesty, they are harmless.

FYODOR. Brother-in-law, do you propose executing those who saved our nation?

GODUNOFF. The ones who are threatening your throne!

FYODOR. And all this because the Nagis threatened me when they were drunk? Because somebody took into

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his head to write to them, probably without the knowledge even of the Shouiskys? Brother-in-law, tell me, are you willing to continue serving me only on condition that I make you a present of their heads?

GODUNOFF. Only on this condition, Your Majesty, can I answer to you for the welfare of the nation. Since you refuse to trust me, once and for all, permit me to resign and take the responsibility of government upon your own shoulders.

FYODOR [*after a long struggle*] Yes, brother-in-law, yes! In this matter, I, myself, shall accept the responsibility! You see, I know that I am not able to take the reins of government into my own hands. What manner of a Tsar am I? It is not difficult to deceive me and cheat me in all affairs. In one thing only I will not be deceived: when I must decide whether a thing is black or white — no, I will not be deceived then! This, brother-in-law, does not require wisdom but merely fairness! Go in peace. I shall not detain you. I rely on God's help. I do not believe in the treason of the Shouiskys; and, even if I did believe it, I would not send them to their death. Enough Russian blood was shed in my father's time — God forgive him!

GODUNOFF. But, Your Majesty . . .

FYODOR. I know what you are going to say — that, because of this, the kingdom will be thrown into confusion? Is that not so? Let God's will be done! I did not want the throne. Apparently it was God's will that a Tsar devoid of wisdom should sit on Russia's throne. Such as I am I must remain. Mine is not the right to speculate cunningly on what the future may bring.

GODUNOFF. But, Your Majesty, think . . .

FYODOR. What is there to think? What is there to think, brother-in-law? The matter is settled. I do

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not need your advice. You are free. Please leave me now! I need to be alone, brother-in-law.

GODUNOFF. I am going, Your Majesty. [*He crosses slowly in the direction of the door, but before opening it, turns around and looks at Fyodor. Fyodor allows him to leave and embraces Irina.*]

FYODOR. Irinushka! My love! Perhaps you are angry with me because I did not call him back?

IRINA. No, Fyodor, no! You did right! Just follow the voice of your guardian angel, and you will not err!

FYODOR. Yes, Irinushka, I think so, too. What can I do? I was not born a Tsar!

IRINA. Why, you are trembling, and your heart is beating so fast?

FYODOR. My side aches slightly. Irinushka, I will not go to church. It is not an unpardonable sin, is it, to miss just one service? I would rather go to my bedroom. I shall lie down and rest for about an hour. Give me your arm to lean on. That is right! Come, Irinushka! I place my trust in God. He will not abandon us! [*Leaves, leaning on Irinushka's arm.*]

CURTAIN.

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ACT FOUR.

SCENE I.

The house of Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky.
Ivan and Princess Mstislavskaya. Left, a table with tumblers, behind which stands Starkoff.

IVAN. Do not cry, Natasha. You see, I am not angry. I forgave you. The old woman led you into mischief, and God punished us.

PRINCESS. Uncle, what will happen to him?

IVAN. To Grigory? Why, he will probably run away into the mountains, if he intends to betray us. Twice I sent for him to consult with me, but he could not be found. What a hot-headed fellow! Had he waited for my return, all this would not have happened!

PRINCESS. Would you have forgiven him, uncle? You would not have forced me to marry the Tsar?

IVAN. I would be sorry to see you the wife of such a man! I would have chided you both. But I would not have broken my word. That meddlesome brother of yours!

PRINCESS. He will not go to the Tsarina! He will not betray us!

IVAN. I myself do not believe that he will betray us. But, whether he does or not, we shall not wait. Before I returned from my audience with the Tsar, everything was already settled!

PRINCESS. Do not torture me — tell me, in God's name, what you have decided!

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IVAN. It is not a girl's concern, Natasha — you will learn later on.

PRINCESS. Uncle, you look so downcast — and so solemn — only with me are you as kindly and tender as you used to be. But I am afraid to look into your eyes. I am trying to read in them the thoughts that worry you.

IVAN. Our clansmen will be here very soon. I have some matters to talk over with them. Go to your room, Natasha.

PRINCESS. Let me remain with you! Allow me to receive your guests!

IVAN. It cannot be done, Natasha.

PRINCESS [*to herself*] Dear Saints! There is a terrible foreboding in my heart!

[*Leaves. Enter the Brothers of Ivan, the Merchants Golub and Krassilnikoff, with the other followers of the Shouiskys. They all stop before Ivan in an attitude of respectful silence. Ivan looks at them for a few seconds in silence.*]

IVAN [*sitting down*] You are all aware of the turn affairs have taken. We can be arrested any moment. Do you all wish to perish, or follow me?

ALL. Prince-Protector, command whatever you wish. We shall follow.

IVAN. Then listen to me! Prince Dimitry! Go immediately to Shoui! Call together all the nobles and clerics and merchants, to the place of execution, and announce to them that Tsar Fyodor has lost his mind and can no longer rule, and that we have chosen the next-in-blood, Dimitry Ivanovitch, to be our Tsar. We shall give him our fealty. Prince Andrei! I am sending you to Riazan. Gather the troops and lead them on to Moscow! Prince Fyodor! Go to Nizhni. Prince Ivan! You go to Suzdal! Baron Golovin! I have chosen

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you to go to Uglitch. There, with the Nagis, you will proclaim Dimitry Tsar, and when the bells peal, you will start for Moscow with flying banners. I, with Mstislavsky and Prince Vassily, will remain here to keep close watch over Godunoff. [*To his aide-de-camp*] Fediuk! Bring the glasses! I drink to everybody's health and success! Long live Tsar Dimitry Ivanovitch!

ALL [*with the exception of Vassily Shouisky*] Long live Tsar Dimitry Ivanovitch!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Dear uncle — do not be angry with me for saying so — but did you not decide rather hurriedly? Just remember! Only this morning you refused to come to this same conclusion!

IVAN. I was a fool. To whom did I go to make complaint of Godunoff. To the Tsar? There is no Tsar in Russia!

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Think it over, Prince!

IVAN. I have considered everything — Golub! I stand guilty before you. You are right. That Tartar fooled me like a little boy. He knew the Tsar better! How did you manage to escape?

GOLUB. On the way, Prince, I frayed the ropes that bound my hands, and, when we crossed the Krassnoye, I knocked down two archers, jumped from the wagon into the water, and swam away.

IVAN. You came back in time. This very day you and Krassilnikoff and the other young men will arouse the merchants!

KRASSILNIKOFF. You may depend upon us, Almighty Prince! One and all we will rise against Boris!

IVAN. Be ready as soon as the sun goes down. Enter the Kremlin when the great Tsar-Pushka booms from the walls! [*To his aide-de-camp.*] Fediuk, fill the loving-cup! To everybody's health! [*He drinks and passes the cup.*]

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MERCHANTS. Prince-Protector! You are our father! We shall stand by you to the very end! May the Lord God help you in destroying Boris! And long live Tsar Dimitry!

IVAN. Amen! [*The Merchants leave. Ivan addresses Mstislavsky*] Prince, you must select at once five hundred trustworthy citizens. Let them go and pay homage to Tsar Dimitry, and, as soon as it grows dark, lead them to the Kremlin. In the meantime I and Prince Vassily will go to Boris' house and seize him.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Oh — Uncle! You know that I am not a coward, nor am I afraid of dangerous enterprises — but still, think it over!

IVAN. If we consider too much, we shall accomplish nothing. There is no need for further deliberation. Our course of action is clear!

SCENE II.

The home of Godunoff.

Godunoff walks up and down excitedly. Kleshnin leans against the tile-stove.

GODUNOFF. I have been dismissed! Fyodor himself seems intent upon putting an end to my activities. I will not permit that to happen! The Nagis have been waiting a long time for my downfall. They will become still more aggressive when they hear of it. They will now stop at nothing. Dimitry is the flag around which they will gather, together with the Tsar's and my own foes. It is to be expected. Riots and chaos will spread from Uglitch like a conflagration. Bitiagovsky — I cannot rely on him — will betray me unless I have him watched. I am compelled . . . I cannot do

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otherwise . . . they are forcing my hand . . . [*To Kleshnin*] Do you know this woman well?

KLESHNIN. She is useful in many ways! Fortune-teller, healer, match-maker, procuress, a good Christian, and on rather friendly terms with the devil — in a word: an extraordinary old woman! She is here already. Shall I call her in?

GODUNOFF. Never mind! Tell her to watch the Tsarievitch, and let her listen to what the Nagis say. What was the Tsar doing when you left him?

KLESHNIN. He was bending over a pile of papers which you had given orders to have brought to him. He scratched his head — poor fellow — he could not make head or tail of them!

GODUNOFF. He will not be able to manage without me. [*Musingly*] I remember again what was foretold me on the day of Tsar Ivan's death. It is now coming true. The one who caused my downfall, my foe, he is in Uglitch! [*Loudly, pulling himself together*] Tell her to watch the Tsarievitch carefully!

KLESHNIN. Do you not want to see her, Little Father?

GODUNOFF. Never mind! [*To himself*] "Weak, yet powerful . . . innocent, yet guilty . . . himself, yet not himself . . . and then — killed!" [*To Kleshnin*] Tell her to watch the Tsarievitch carefully! [*Leaves.*]

KLESHNIN [*alone*] To watch him! Hm! Don't I know what is really your heart's desire! Why not? I shall take this sin upon my conscience! I am neither fastidious nor lazy. As long as he is alive the Shouiskys and the Nagis will give us no peace. See, how his wings were clipped! I did not expect this outbreak from Fyodor Ivanovitch! Naturally, he will not be able to manage . . . and if in the meantime something should happen . . . ? [*Opens door*] Come in, woman!

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VOLOKHOVA [*enters, in her hand a holy wafer*] Protect us, Blessed Virgin! I greet you, sir. I brought you a holy wafer from the Church of the Three Saints to bless you!

KLESHNIN [*in a kindly manner*] Sit down here, please, little dove! Did they tell you why I sent for you?

VOLOKHOVA [*sitting down*] They told me, sir, they told me: the noble Godunoff wishes to send away the Tsarievitch's nurse, and have me take her place. You may rest assured! I shall watch over him as if he were the apple of my eye. Sleeping and waking, eating and drinking, I shall watch over him!

KLESHNIN. Have you ever before been a nurse?

VOLOKHOVA. I do not wish to lie, sir. I was never a nurse. But I love children very much. A child is like one of God's angels! I nursed my own son and kept him under my wing until he became twenty years of age, until the year of the plague. Only during that year was I afraid to keep him with me.

KLESHNIN. Why so, little dove?

VOLOKHOVA. At such a time misfortunes can happen easily. Suddenly the epidemic may attack one, and before you know it one is dead and buried and forgotten by all. You can take no chances at such a time.

KLESHNIN. Are you a professional match-maker now, little dove?

VOLOKHOVA. Yes, noble, sir, I am a match-maker. It is sinful to praise one's self. And yet, there are few weddings celebrated in Moscow without my help.

KLESHNIN. What was the last wedding you arranged?

VOLOKHOVA. Prince Shakhovskoy and Princess Mstislavskaya, sir.

KLESHNIN. Is she not the one whom you wanted

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to offer to the Tsar yesterday, in spite of the fact that the Tsarina is still alive?

VOLOKHOVA. God forbid! Who is the scoundrel who told you so? The dog, the thief, the slanderer! May his tongue swell! May he grow blind!

KLESHNIN [*severely*] Silence, old woman! Silence! We know everything! The late Tsar, Ivan Vassilitch, whose memory we reverence, would have ordered you, witch, to be burned at the stake over a slow fire! But the noble Boris Fyodorovitch Godunoff is magnanimous. Instead of punishing you he will reward you, if you will know how to fulfill your duty by the Tsarievitch.

VOLOKHOVA. I know how, Little Father! I know how, sir! You may depend on me! I shall not allow a hair on his head to be harmed! I shall take care of him well and faithfully!

KLESHNIN. But if through no fault of yours something should happen to him. . . .

VOLOKHOVA. Why, sir, what can happen to him as long as I am here?

KLESHNIN [*meaningly*] He will not hold you responsible for it! [*Volokhova looks at him in astonishment*] Listen, old woman! No one has power over life or death — and he is an epileptic!

VOLOKHOVA. What do you mean, Little Father? What is it? I cannot get it through my head!

KLESHNIN. You will, presently!

VOLOKHOVA. Yes, yes, yes, yes! Quite so, sir, quite so! God's will must be done! If I am not held responsible, anything and everything may happen, of course! We must all bow to God's will, sir!

KLESHNIN. You may go, witch! I shall see you before I go. But remember — money, lots of it — or jail!

VOLOKHOVA. Why, sir! Why prison? Be generous.

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and everything is settled. Just permit me to take my son along!

KLESHNIN. You may do so. Go now!

VOLOKHOVA. I beg your pardon, sir. You shall be pleased with us. Of course! Of course! These are uncertain times, where anything may happen! God only is strong and all-powerful, the Lord only! And our affair is settled! [*Leaves.*]

SERVANT [*announcing*] Fediuk Starkoff!

KLESHNIN. Show him in!

[*Enter Starkoff.*]

SCENE III.

The Tsarina's apartment.

Fyodor sitting, busy with a pile of papers, wipes the perspiration from his face. In front of him are the two imperial seals, one big and the other small. Irina goes to him and puts her hand over his shoulder.

IRINA. You should rest a little, Fyodor.

FYODOR. I cannot understand a thing! Boris selected these matters for me to attend to on purpose! The only intelligible paper that I have come across is a letter from our messenger in Vienna. The Emperor is sending me six monkeys as a present. Irinushka, I will send them on to Dimitry.

IRINA. You will not have them sent here?

FYODOR. You see, Irinushka, if Boris were willing to remain . . .

IRINA. Have you not yet decided who is to replace him?

FYODOR. Why, you yourself said that it is better to wait. You thought that he will offer to make peace. But instead he sent me this pile of papers. I simply

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exhausted myself, trying to understand them, and now there is another misfortune: I sent for Prince Ivan Shouisky to help me with these matters, and he replied that he is ill and unable to come. He is probably stubborn. I sent for him again, saying that there is a matter of importance of which I wish to tell him. [*Kleshnin enters*] Ah, is that you, Petrovitch? Where do you come from?

KLESHNIN. From a sick man's bedside.

FYODOR. From where?

KLESHNIN. From the bedside of your sick servant, Godunoff.

FYODOR. Is he sick?

KLESHNIN. How can he help being sick when, in reward for all his devotion, you chased him away like a dog? I am glad that you are well!

FYODOR. Why, I . . .

KLESHNIN. What is the use of talking? Little Father, from your early childhood you were harsh and austere, and of unfeeling heart. When you make up your mind to do a thing, you carry it out though heaven and earth crash together!

FYODOR. I know myself, Petrovitch, that I am austere.

KLESHNIN. In this respect you are just like your father.

FYODOR. I know it. But is it possible that Boris will refuse to return if I acknowledge that I was at fault?

KLESHNIN. He does not demand that much. Just command me to seal this order concerning a careful watch to be kept on the Shouiskys — and he will again serve you.

FYODOR. What? Does he still suspect them?

KLESHNIN. Your Majesty! It is not a matter of suspicion but of plain fact! Starkoff, Prince Ivan's aide-

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de-camp, has just informed us that to-day Prince Ivan has decided to proclaim your little brother Tsar, while he intends to drive you from the throne before sunrise. Why, Little Father, you can ask Starkoff yourself!

FYODOR. Oh — all these rumors! This is the first time I hear Starkoff's name while Shouisky's name is known everywhere like the pealing of a bell. Do you expect me to believe this Starkoff in preference to Shouisky?

KLESHNIN. Believe or not, I am telling you this: if you do not order them all at once to . . .

STEWARD [*announcing*] Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky!

KLESHNIN. What? He here?

FYODOR [*joyfully*] He came! He came, Irinushka!

KLESHNIN. Give orders to have them carefully watched!

FYODOR. Shame on you, Petrovitch! [*To the steward*] Ask him to come in. [*To Kleshnin*] I shall ask him in your presence. [*Enter Ivan*] Good day, Prince Ivan! Just imagine, an accusation has been made — [*Ivan becomes embarrassed*] But I do not believe it. I want you to tell me now that you are innocent of any plotting against me, as you have always been loyal in the sight of all the world. Your word will satisfy me.

IVAN. Your Majesty . . .

FYODOR. Understand me, Prince. I do not doubt you. I merely want . . .

KLESHNIN. No, Little Father, allow me! If this is what you intend to do, then let me ask him. Prince-Protector! Can you swear by the blessed ikon over yonder that you did not intend to betray your Tsar?

IVAN. I do not recognize your right to question me.

FYODOR. Prince, it is not he — it is I who am asking you!

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KLESHNIN. I shall take down the ikon at once!

FYODOR. There is no need of ikons! Tell me on your word of honor. Well, Prince?

IVAN. Spare me!

IRINA [*who has been watching Ivan steadily*] My Lord, why offend with such a question one whose virtues are a household word? Do not ask him. Just exact his solemn oath that he will remain in the future as true and faithful as he has been in the past.

FYODOR. No, Irina, I want to shame this man. Tell me on your word of honor, Prince! Were you plotting against me? Why don't you speak?

KLESHNIN. On your word of honor! Do you hear, Prince? [*To himself*] It would have been more binding had he sworn on the ikon.

IRINA [*to Fyodor*] Dear husband —

FYODOR. Well, Prince?

IVAN. Spare me!

FYODOR. No. I shall not!

KLESHNIN. Are you perhaps afraid, Prince?

FYODOR. Afraid — nonsense! He is stubborn and hard, but I am more hard and stubborn than he. Tit for tat! I shall not let him go until he answers.

IVAN. Very well, then. I shall tell the whole truth!

FYODOR [*frightened*] What? What do you mean to . . . ?

IVAN. Yes! You heard the truth. I have plotted against you!

FYODOR. The Saints preserve us!

IVAN. Your weakness has exhausted our patience. You have given over the empire into strange hands. For a long time you have ceased to be Tsar. I have decided to tear Russia from Godunoff's grip!

FYODOR [*in an undertone*] Quiet! Quiet! [*Pointing*

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to Kleshnin] Not in his presence! Do not speak in his presence! He will repeat everything to Boris.

KLESHNIN. Continue, Prince!

FYODOR. Be quiet, be quiet! Tell me later when we are alone!

KLESHNIN. His Majesty is awaiting your confession!

IVAN. Yes! To-day I acknowledged your brother as Tsar!

FYODOR. Petrovitch — do not believe him! Do not believe him, Irina!

IVAN. Because of whatever merits I may have acquired in the past, I shall demand one boon from you! I alone am guilty! Do not kill my allies. Without me they are not dangerous to you!

FYODOR. What are you raving about? What nonsense! You do not realize yourself what fantastic things you are telling me!

IVAN. Do not dream of pardoning me, Your Majesty. For, if you did, I would again plot against you. You are not able to rule. But I cannot remain under Godunoff's heel.

KLESHNIN [*to himself*] The honor of a Prince! Bah! He needs no urging to confess his guilt!

FYODOR [*takes Ivan aside*] Prince, listen! Just have a little patience. Give Dimitry a chance to grow up. And I will then abdicate of my own free will. I swear it by my Savior!

KLESHNIN [*crosses to table and takes one of the seals*] Shall I seal this order?

FYODOR. What order? You did not understand what I said! I myself ordered Dimitry proclaimed Tsar! I gave this order — I am Tsar! But I have changed my mind. It is no longer necessary. I have changed my mind, Prince!

KLESHNIN. Have you lost your mind?

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FYODOR [*whispering to Ivan*] Go away! At once! I shall take all the blame! Away with you!

IVAN [*upset*] No, he is a saint! God does not want me to rebel — God does not want it! Your simplicity of heart is God-like, Fyodor Ivanovitch! I cannot rebel against you!

FYODOR. Go away! Go away! Undo what you have done! [*Pushes him from the room.*]

KLESHNIN [*passing the seal across the document, ready to use it*] Little Father! Have the order sealed! Do not allow him to gather an army! Tsarina! Tell him that the nation's welfare depends on this very order!

IRINA. It is no longer needed! The storm has passed. Shouisky is no longer our enemy.

FYODOR. Did you hear, Petrovitch, did you hear? Irinushka, you are an angel! Nothing escapes you. You observe and understand everything. Yes — Shouisky is no longer our enemy!

[*Noise behind the door. Chambermaid runs in, frightened.*]

CHAMBERMAID. Tsarina! Hide! Some madman has broken into the house!

SHAKHOVSKOY [*heard outside*] Stand back! Stand back! Let me go! I must see the Tsarina! [*Shakhovskoy appears on threshold, held back, by several servants. He pushes them aside and throws himself at Irina's feet*] Forgive me, forgive me, Tsarina! I tried vainly to see you since this morning.

FYODOR. Why — it is Shakhovskoy!

SERVANTS [*rushing in accompanied by Archers*] Seize the thief!

FYODOR. Silence, silence, men! There is no thief here! [*To Shakhovskoy*] Tell me! What do you *want?*

SHAKHOVSKOY. Tsar! Punish me. But hear me first! They want to divorce you and the Tsarina!

FYODOR. You are dreaming, Prince!

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KLESHNIN [*to himself*] So that is how the land lies! [*To Fyodor*] Tsar, listen to him!

SHAKHOVSKOY. They want to make my fiancée your wife!

FYODOR. Who? They? Who are they?

SHAKHOVSKOY. The uncles of my fiancée, Princess Mstislavskaya. The Shouiskys!

FYODOR. Why, Prince, you are mad beyond all hope!

SHAKHOVSKOY [*rises and hands the Tsar a paper*] Here is their appeal! Little Mother! Make them give back my fiancée! Almighty Tsar — order them to have our wedding celebrated this very day — at once!

KLESHNIN. We have heard rumors about this document. Let me have a look at it. [*Takes the paper and, after glancing it over, turns to Fyodor*] You see, Little Father? A moment ago you said that the Tsarina knows Prince Ivan. But it seems that she does not. She is goodness and kindliness itself. Just now she was Ivan's angel of mercy. And she is the one whom he wants to take out of your life as if she were a sinful, guilty, erring wife, in order that you may marry his niece! You do not believe it, Little Father? Just read this! [*Hands the paper to Fyodor.*]

FYODOR [*reads*] "Almighty Tsar, contract another marriage. Take Princess Mstislavskaya for your wife. As for Tsarina Irina, let her enter a convent . . ."

KLESHNIN. You know Ivan Petrovitch's handwriting? Read the signature!

FYODOR [*reads*] "We all greet you respectfully, and have hereto affixed our signatures: Dionisy, Metropolitan of all the Russias; Archbishop Varlaam of Krutits; Prince . . ." What? [*With trembling voice*] "Prince — Ivan — Petrovitch Shouisky!" His handwriting! He, too, signed! Irinushka, he signed! [*Sinks into armchair and covers his face with his hands.*]

IRINA. Fyodor!

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FYODOR. He! He! Any one else but he! To separate you and me! [*Cries.*]

IRINA. Control yourself, Fyodor!

FYODOR. To banish you!

IRINA. Dear husband! I cannot understand what it means. But just think! If Prince Ivan meant to drive you from the throne, could he have planned to make Princess Mstislavskaya your wife?

FYODOR. You — my Irina — to send you into a convent —

IRINA. But it is not going to happen!

FYODOR [*jumping up*] It shall not be! No! I will not permit anything to happen to you! Let them come. Let them come with cannon. Just let them try!

IRINA. Dear husband, you are exciting yourself without cause. Who can separate us? Why — you are Tsar!

FYODOR. Yes — I am Tsar! They forgot that I am Tsar! Petrovitch, where is that order? [*Runs to the table and seals the order*] Here — here — give it to Boris!

[*Kleshnin leaves.*]

IRINA. What have you done?

FYODOR. Let them be arrested and put into prison!

IRINA. My Lord! My Tsar! Do not be so hasty!

FYODOR. Prison — the prison for them!

SHAKHOVSKOY [*pulling himself together*] Almighty Tsar, have mercy! I did not ask for this! I appealed to you only concerning my fiancée —

FYODOR. Boris will settle everything for everybody!

SHAKHOVSKOY. He will ruin them! He will murder the Shouiskys!

FYODOR. He will settle everything!

SHAKHOVSKOY. I shall be guilty of their death! Tsar, have mercy!

FYODOR. The prison, to prison with them!

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SHAKHOVSKOY. God! What have I done? [*Runs out.*]

IRINA. Dear husband, listen! Call back Kleshnin! Do not be too hasty! Do not send the Shouiskys to prison now that they are accused of treason!

FYODOR. No, no, no, Irinushka! Do not even ask me! You do not understand this. If I wait, I will pardon them perhaps. I will pardon them, and they need a lesson. Let them go to prison! Let them get a taste of what it means to separate you and me! Let them stay in prison for a while! [*He leaves.*]

SCENE IV.

The banks of the Yaousa River. Across the river is a bridge. On the farther bank is a bastion, cut by gates. On one side meadows, windmills, a monastery. People belonging to various classes of society are strolling across the bridge. Kuriukoff approaches, a battle-ax in his hands, followed by Lute-Player.

KURIUKOFF. Stand here, fellow. Tune your lute, and as soon as people gather around, begin to sing a song about Prince Ivan Petrovitch. God help us! This is what I have lived to see.

[*The player tunes his lute.*]

KURIUKOFF [*examines his ax*] Well, old friend, old ax of my youth! Since the days of the late Vassily Ivanovitch, I never took you from the wall. You have become rusty. But to-day you will surely be of use to me once more! [*To Lute-Player*] Well — fellow? Get ready. People are beginning to come.

A VILLAGER [*approaches Kuriukoff*] Good day, father Bogdan Semyonovitch! What kind of an ax have you there?

KURIUKOFF. It is my grandson's ax, little brother, my grandson's. It appears that once more the Tartars

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are threatening us. You see — my grandson was too busy, and I undertook to have the ax ground. And here I stopped a moment to listen to this lad's melodies.

VILLAGER. Are the Tartars very close?

KURIUKOFF. Rather close, I hear.

SECOND VILLAGER. Whom will they send against them?

THIRD VILLAGER. Perhaps again Prince Ivan Petrovitch!

KURIUKOFF. They will send Godunoff.

FIRST VILLAGER. Gracious! What are you saying, Bogdan Semyonovitch?

KURIUKOFF [*vindictively*] Why not? Is not Godunoff a warrior?

THIRD VILLAGER. How can he compare to Ivan Petrovitch?

KURIUKOFF [*to Lute-Player*] Well, fellow, how about that song? How about it?

LUTE-PLAYER [*singing*]

"A king was going to war,
To march against the town of Pskoff;
Having come close to the town, he began boasting:
'This very town with all its towers,
I shall take, and Prince Shouisky, the warrior,
I shall bind hand and foot, and sweep throughout All the Russias!' "

A MAN. Sweep throughout all the Russias! Ho! He does not *want* much!

SECOND MAN. To bind Ivan Petrovitch hand and foot! Just try it!

KURIUKOFF [*to Lute-Player*] Well, my lad?

LUTE-PLAYER [*continues*]

"A terrible storm is raging over Pskoff,
Loud ring the sabers against the walls,
And fiery bullets drop on the town like hail!"

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A WOMAN. Mother of God, what horrors!
LUTE-PLAYER [*continues*]

"But when the moon rises, the Almighty Prince Ivan Petrovitch
Appears on the battlements, walking straight ahead without stopping,
Facing the bullets fearlessly!"

SECOND MAN. Yes! He was always fearless!
LUTE-PLAYER [*continues*]

"We have taken a solemn oath:
We shall not give up Pskoff, but fight to the last drop!"

FIRST MAN. And they did not surrender Pskoff! No!
SECOND MAN. The Holy Saints defended it!
A WOMAN. The Mother of God protected it!
KURIUKOFF. And who was sitting there, Christians? Who was it?
A MAN. One word! Ivan Petrovitch!
KURIUKOFF. Just so!
LUTE-PLAYER [*continues*]

"For five months the king beleaguered Pskoff.
When the sixth month came, he grew discouraged.
And then the Prince made a sortie, and beat
The entire Lithuanian forces. The king himself barely escaped.
While running away, he, that dog, cursed:
'Do not let me remain in Russia, Almighty God, nor my children,
Nor my great-grandchildren!'"

SECOND MAN. Served him right! Let them find out what Prince Ivan is like!
LUTE-PLAYER [*finishing his song*]

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"Glory be to the sun shining in the heavens!
Glory be on earth to Prince Ivan Petrovitch!
Glory to all Christian folks!"

A MAN. Glory, glory indeed! You have consoled us, gentle Lute-Player!

SECOND MAN. You have honored the one who should be honored! [*Giving money to the Lute-Player*] Take this, my lad!

ALL. Here is a present for you! Here! Here is money! [*They all drop money into the Lute-Player's hat.*]

A MAN. Brothers, look! Who is that galloping along?

SECOND MAN. Look how he whips his horse! He must be a messenger!

MESSENGER [*on horseback*] Let me pass! Let me pass! Make way! Clear the bridge!

FIRST VILLAGER. Friend, where are you from? What news?

MESSENGER. From Tieshloff! The Tartars have crossed the Oka and are on their way to Moscow! Let me pass! [*They all stand aside. The Messenger gallops across the bridge into the city.*]

FIRST MAN. Heavens! They will soon be here!

A WOMAN [*screaming*] Merciful God! Again they will burn our villages!

THIRD VILLAGER. There she goes and bawls! As though we had never seen the Tartars before! What do we have Prince Ivan Petrovitch for?

FOURTH VILLAGER. Even the king, who is nothing except a more decent Tartar, ran away like a dog from Prince Ivan Petrovitch!

THIRD VILLAGER. The man who can vanquish Ivan Petrovitch has not yet been created!

KURIUKOFF [*stepping to the front*] Such a man has indeed been created, Christians! Indeed! The accursed one! He has vanquished Ivan Petrovitch! He has

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bound him—him—our savior—he bound him hand and foot!

THE PEOPLE. Why—God protect you, Little Father — What are you saying? Who dared put hand on Prince Ivan Petrovitch?

KURIUKOFF. Godunoff, Christians, Godunoff, Godunoff wants to do away with him! Soon he, our father, will be led across this very bridge to prison! [*Noise and loud cries amongst the crowd*] Remember, people, who has always taken our part? Who defended us against our enemies? Against magistrates and soldiers! Against inspectors and jailers! Who stopped the king from conquering Moscow? Who turned back the Tartar hordes again and again? The Shouiskys have always stood by us, Christians! Is there any one in all the world who can compare with the Shouiskys? And whom did the Princes and nobles beg for support against Godunoff? People, without the Shouiskys we are lost!

VOICES IN THE CROWD. We shall let no harm come to the Shouiskys! No! No harm shall come to our father, Ivan Petrovitch!

KURIUKOFF. Let us rescue him from Godunoff, Christians, and carry him home on our shoulders!

THE PEOPLE. To the rescue!

KURIUKOFF. Let us stand by the Shouiskys, as we did in the days of Alona Vassilievna! Here he comes, Christians! Here he comes, our father, Ivan Petrovitch! Here he comes, he and his brothers, in chains!

[*Through the gates of the bastion tambourine-players on horseback ride; behind them rides Prince Tureynin; behind the latter, archers are leading Ivan and the other Shouiskys, with the exception of Vassily, in chains.*]

TUREYNIN [*to the people*] Clear the bridge! You are blocking the way!

KURIUKOFF. Little Father, Prince Ivan Petrovitch!

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I told you — do not make peace! I told you, dear, do not make peace with Godunoff!

THE PEOPLE. Your cause is just, Ivan Petrovitch, and we are with you!

TUREYNIN. Make way, scoundrels! We are taking the Shouiskys to prison, by the Tsar's command!

THE PEOPLE. By the Tsar's command? That is a lie! By Godunoff's command!

TUREYNIN [*to the Archers*] Disperse the crowd!

KURIUKOFF. Shoulder to shoulder, Christians! Long live the Shouiskys!

THE PEOPLE. Long live the Shouiskys! We shall rescue our father!

KURIUKOFF. Well, then, follow me all! As in the days of Alona Vassilievna! The Shouiskys! The Shouiskys! [*He attacks the Archers with his ax, the crowd following him.*]

THE PEOPLE. The Shouiskys! The Shouiskys!

TUREYNIN [*to Archers*] Kill the bandits! Throw them in the water! [*General tumult.*]

KURIUKOFF [*falling from the bridge*] The Shouiskys! I give my soul into God's hands!

IVAN. Be quiet, my friends, my people! Listen to me!

THE PEOPLE. Dear father! We shall let no harm come to you!

IVAN. Listen to me, my people! Stand back! It is the Tsar's command! Do not put your heads into the noose!

TUREYNIN. Go ahead!

IVAN. Wait, Prince, let me say one last word to my people. Forgive me, people of Moscow, and remember me with kindness. We were with you to the very end, but God did not grant us success. New laws are being put into effect. Bow to God's will, observe the Tsar's commands, do not rise against Godunoff! There is no one left to lead you, nor to protect you against him! I am merely reaping what I sowed. I have sinned, not because

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I quarreled with Godunoff, but because by foul means I tried to separate the Tsar from the Tsarina. And then I committed a still greater crime, when I rose against the Tsar himself. He is the Holy Tsar, my people, appointed by God, and his Tsarina is also Holy. May God grant them a long and happy life! [*To Tureynin*] Now, Prince, let us go on. Forgive me, people of Moscow!

THE PEOPLE. Little Father! To whom are you abandoning us poor orphans?

TUREYNIN. Beat the tambourines!

[*The tambourine-players beat their tambourines. The crowd falls back. The Shouiskys are being led across the stage. Through the city gates rushes in Shakhovskoy, hatless, a sword in one hand, a pistol in the other, behind him Krassilnikoff and Golub, armed with spears.*]

SHAKHOVSKOY [*out of breath*] Where is Prince Ivan Petrovitch?

A MAN. What do you *want* him for? To rescue him, no doubt! You are a bit late, Prince!

SECOND MAN [*pointing back stage*] This very minute the prison gates closed behind him.

SHAKHOVSKOY. Then come with me, people! We shall tear the prison walls stone from stone!

KRASSILNIKOFF. Why are you hesitating, people? Don't you know us?

GOLUB. This is Prince Shakhovskoy. And us you know!

VOICES IN THE CROWD. Well then, brothers? Really! We are enough in numbers! We can rescue him! Why should we not accompany the Prince?

SHAKHOVSKOY. To the prison, brothers! The Shouiskys are still alive!

THE PEOPLE. The Shouiskys! The Shouiskys! [*All run, following Shakhovskoy.*]

CURTAIN.

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ACT FIVE.

SCENE I.

A small drawing room in the Tsar's Palace. Godunoff and Kleshnin.

GODUNOFF. Have all the adherents of the Shouiskys been arrested?

KLESHNIN. All the princes of the houses of Bekassoff, Ouroussoff, Tatieff, and Kolitcheff are already behind the prison bars. The only one whom we could not put our hands on is Golovin. He simply seems to have vanished into thin air. As for Mstislavsky, you gave orders not to touch him.

SERVANT [*addressing Godunoff*] Vassilly Ivanovitch Shouisky is here, brought by imperial command.

GODUNOFF. Show him in. [*To Kleshnin*] Leave us alone. [*Kleshnin and the servant leave. Vassily Shouisky enters*] Good morning, Prince. I have learned that you tried to keep your uncle from carrying out his dastardly conspiracy. I praise you for it.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. I took the solemn oath to be faithful to my Tsar. . . .

GODUNOFF [*continuing*] And to denounce the Tsar's foes. But you did not denounce Prince Ivan.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. I knew, sir, that you would find out everything through Starkoff.

GODUNOFF. And were you aware that this document is also known to me?

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VASSILY SHOUISKY. Yes.

GODUNOFF [*showing him the document*] Do you confess to having signed it?

VASSILY SHOUISKY. I do. I confess, sir, furthermore that this petition was due to my initiative. Why deny it? I tried to be of service to you. When my uncle entered into an agreement with His Holiness and our Moscow adherents joined in, everybody offered his advice. There were even some people in Uglitch who wanted to proclaim Dimitry Tsar. In order to avoid this contingency, I suggested this appeal. Why did you not permit us to present it to the Tsar? You knew of its existence. The Tsar, forewarned by you, would have heard us and refused us, and everything would have finished peacefully.

GODUNOFF. Your words seem plausible enough. It does not matter whether I believe you or not. You are shrewd. You have already learned that it is not easy to fool me, and that it is difficult to argue with me. You are in my hands. However, I shall not punish you for past offenses, nor do I demand promises for the future. Whether it is more advantageous to you to be with me or against me, you must yourself decide. You may take your time about making up your mind.

VASSILY SHOUISKY. Boris Fyodorovitch, what is there to think about? I am your servant!

GODUNOFF. We understand each other. You will forgive me then if I now satisfy myself if you are sincere in your protestations. [*Vassily Shouisky leaves.*]

SERVANT [*announces*] Sir, the Tsarina is coming.

[*Irina enters, accompanied by several noblewomen. Godunoff kneels before her.*]

GODUNOFF. Almighty Tsarina, I did not expect this honor.

IRINA [*to the Noblewomen*] Leave us. [*The Noble-*

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women leave] Brother, it is not you but I who should kneel.

GODUNOFF [*rising*] Sister, why did you come here unannounced?

IRINA. Forgive me. Every minute counts. I came to beg you, brother —

GODUNOFF. What about?

IRINA. Is it possible that you will kill Prince Ivan?

GODUNOFF. He confessed his treason himself.

IRINA. He repented! We can trust his word. The Tsar's magnanimity conquered him. What are you afraid of? Would you really return to the terrible days of Tsar Ivan? Those days are past. Is not kindliness Fyodor's only strength? Is he not beloved by the people because of it? And Fyodor's strength is yours. You must keep it intact for your own sake. Through it, and through it alone, we achieved with the Shouiskys what Tsar Ivan himself could not achieve by threats of death!

GODUNOFF. Tsar Ivan was like a great volcano, and from the bowels of this volcano came an earthquake which shook all the world, and there would shoot up tongues of flame that carried death and destruction through all the land. Tsar Fyodor is quite different. I would rather compare him to a cleft in a green meadow. Its ruts and hillocks are overgrown with green, silken grass. But if you wander about carelessly, both the shepherd and his flock will fall through the cleft — into a precipice. We have a saying that once upon a time a church was swallowed by the earth, and so a hole appeared, and the people call it the ghost church. And there is a rumor that on very quiet days one can hear a distant tolling of bells and chanting of hymns. Fyodor seems to me like such a sainted but unreal church. In his soul he is always frank to friend and foe. His heart is filled with love and kindliness. And it is as though bells tolled gently in his

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inmost self. But what is the use of all this kindliness and piety since the man has no strength? Seven years have passed since Tsar Ivan swept across Russia like the scourge of God; seven years since with great effort I put stone upon stone to erect a building, that sacred temple, that powerful empire, that new and prosperous Russia of ours, the Russia over which I spent many sleepless nights in thought! But everything is futile! I am building over a precipice! And, in a second, everything can crash into ruins. Should the most insignificant enemy desire it, he could win over the Tsar's heart, and my own will, with which I steeled his heart, he will forget. I have many foes, and they are not all negligible. You know the insolence of the Nagis and the Shouiskys' unconquerable pride — no, do not interrupt me — I respect the Shouiskys — but their loyalty is stupid and short-sighted. Their path is prosy and hackneyed; chained they are to the old ideals of loyalty; and with such a Tsar as Fyodor there must be no room for them!

IRINA. You are right, Boris. Prince Ivan has been in your way for a long time. But you are at last triumphant. His guilt, of which he is now ashamed, is a sure proof that in the future Fyodor will have no servant more devoted than he.

GODUNOFF. True! He will no longer rebel nor plot against the throne. But do you think that he has also given up the idea of thwarting me?

IRINA. You have broken him. You have conquered him completely. He is in prison. Is it possible that you seek still further vengeance?

GODUNOFF. I bear no grudge toward a living soul. I listen to neither friendship nor enmity. I see only my duty, clear before me. I do not destroy my personal enemies, but those of the cause.

IRINA. Consider the good the man has done!

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GODUNOFF. He was rewarded by many honors!

IRINA. The Khan of the Nagis, followed by his horde, is driving to the walls of Moscow. Who will command our defense against him?

GODUNOFF. It will not be the first time that Moscow has seen the Khan.

IRINA. Shouisky alone can save Moscow.

GODUNOFF. Moscow is as blind to-day as ever. The one who, in the very heart of our country, rebels against the Tsar is much more dangerous than the Khan. Dangerous he is to the peace of the kingdom. He, too, is dangerous who strives ceaselessly to overgrow the crop of our young generation with the weeds of ancient strife. Irina! I am in the habit of honoring in you a fair mind, and a clear understanding of the affairs of state. Do not let useless pity overshadow your brain! I counted upon you, Irina! Hitherto you have been more against than for me. You thought that Fyodor would learn to be Tsar. Your feelings were hurt because he was guided by me. But you see his helplessness. From now on help me, instead of hindering me. Not without reason did God make you the weak Tsar's Tsarina. A grave responsibility is on your shoulders. You must be Tsarina, not a mere woman. You must now influence Fyodor to cease interfering in behalf of the Shouiskys.

IRINA. If I could persuade myself that they must perish for the good of the empire, then perhaps I would find enough courage to stifle the grief in my heart. But I do not believe, brother, I do not believe that this bloodshed will help the land. Nor do I believe that you yourself will grow stronger through such a deed. No! The blame will weigh heavily upon you. God forbid that I help you! No! I rely upon Fyodor!

GODUNOFF. You mean to oppose me again?

IRINA. Our paths are not the same.

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GODUNOFF. A time will come when you will understand, Irina, that your path and mine run parallel. [*He opens the door and calls out*] The Tsarina summons her ladies-in-waiting!

[*The Noblewomen enter.*]

IRINA. Forgive me, brother!

GODUNOFF [*bowing very low*] Forgive me, Almighty Tsarina!

SCENE II.

A square in front of a cathedral. Beggars are crowding about the entrance. In the background are seen crowds of people.

FIRST BEGGAR. Will the Tsar come out soon?

BLIND MAN. Don't you hear them singing a requiem for the dead Tsar's soul? They have sung so many that his memory is eternal by now. He will come out soon?

SECOND BEGGAR. Who is celebrating the mass?

BLIND MAN. Ioff of Rostoff is officiating. There are rumors that he will be made Metropolitan, and His Holiness will be unfrocked.

FIRST BEGGAR. Will Dionisy be unfrocked?

BLIND MAN. Yes. Dionisy and Varlaam of Krutits will be unfrocked. They have incurred Godunoff's displeasure by siding with the Shouiskys.

THIRD BEGGAR [*on crutches, elbowing his way to the front*] Brothers, have you heard what is going on in the Red Square?

BLIND MAN. What is going on there?

THIRD BEGGAR. They are decapitating the merchants.

FIRST BEGGAR. What merchants?

THIRD BEGGAR. The Nogaieffs! Krassilnikoff! The Golubs, father and son! Others are being brought!

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ALL. God's will be done! Why?

THIRD BEGGAR. Because they sided with the Shouiskys. The Shouiskys themselves are already in prison.

FIRST BEGGAR. God have mercy upon them! What did the Tsar say?

THIRD BEGGAR. Godunoff overruled the Tsar's wishes!

ALL. Stand back! Stand back! Here comes the Tsarina!

[*The beggars step to one side. Irina approaches with Princess Mstislavskaya, her ladies-in-waiting following. The Steward walks ahead and distributes alms.*]

IRINA. Wait here, princess. When the Tsar comes out, bow low to him and beg him to show mercy to your uncle.

PRINCESS. Almighty Tsarina! May God reward you for having brought me here!

IRINA. Do not be afraid, child. The Tsar is a kindly man. Why do you tremble so? Let me straighten out your clothes. Look how you have deranged your hair.

PRINCESS. Mother Tsarina, I am so afraid. Tell me what to say to the Tsar.

IRINA. Speak straight from your heart, child. Where is your fiancé? He should be with you now.

PRINCESS. I have not seen him, Tsarina, since the night, the hour when . . . [*She covers her face with her hands and sobs.*]

IRINA. Poor child! He is not any happier than you! He would gladly die, no doubt, to undo what he has done!

PRINCESS. May the holy Virgin bless you for your pity! [*All the bells peal. The Tsar's courtiers come from the cathedral, two of them distributing alms. Fyodor follows. The Princess speaks in a whisper*] Now, Tsarina?

IRINA. Not yet. Wait a little, child. You see, he is about to pray.

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FYODOR [*kneels, facing the cathedral*] Oh, Tsar, my father! You who have atoned for your sins by endless repentance and suffering, you are now in Heaven, in God's presence! You knew how to reign! Inspire me! Imbue me with one particle of your strength and teach me how to be Tsar! [*Rises and starts to go.*]

IRINA [*to Princess*] Now, Princess!

PRINCESS [*throws herself at Fyodor's feet*] Almighty Tsar, have mercy!

FYODOR. What is it, young princess? Get up, get up!

PRINCESS. Spare my uncle!

FYODOR. Who are you? Who is your uncle?

PRINCESS. Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky!

FYODOR. So you are Princess Mstislavskaya? Yes, yes, I recognize you.

IRINA [*throwing herself on her knees*] Dear husband! She joins me in my prayer for Prince Ivan Petrovitch!

FYODOR. Irina! What is the matter with you? Irina, get up! Get up, both of you! I shall pardon Prince Ivan Petrovitch, but he must remain in prison for a while.

IRINA. Dear husband, pardon him now. Send for him at once! Command him to defend Moscow as he defended Pskoff in former days.

FYODOR. All right, Irina, I myself wished to send for him — I meant to send for him a little later — but for your sake, Irina, I shall send for him at once. [*To Godunoff*] Boris, send for him!

GODUNOFF. Almighty Tsar, you yourself have permitted us to try the Shouiskys. The trial has begun.

FYODOR. It must be stopped at once.

GODUNOFF. But, Almighty Tsar —

FYODOR. You heard my command!

GODUNOFF. Almighty Tsar!

FYODOR. You have chosen an inopportune time to go

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against my wishes. From to-day on I shall be Tsar! I will be glad to listen to all advice and suggestions, but only hear them, not obey them. Where is Prince Ivan's warden? Where is Prince Tureynin?

KLESHNIN. Here he comes. [*Tureynin approaches.*]

FYODOR [*to Tureynin*] All the Shouiskys are to be released immediately. Ivan Petrovitch is to be brought to me at once. [*Tureynin does not budge*] You have heard? What are you waiting for?

TUREYNIN. Almighty Tsar!

FYODOR. How dare you stand before me without moving when I order you to do something?

TUREYNIN. Almighty Tsar, I am powerless to execute your command — Ivan Petrovitch —

FYODOR. Well?

TUREYNIN. Last night he —

FYODOR. Last night — what? Speak! Well? What?

TUREYNIN. Last night he hanged himself.

PRINCESS. Dear Mother of God!

TUREYNIN. We are to blame. We should have watched him more carefully. We were on the lookout so that the people might not rescue him. Yesterday we repulsed the crowds. They came with the merchants, commanded by Shakhovskoy, and had I not shot him dead, they would have broken in.

[*Princess faints.*]

FYODOR. [*In a terrible rage, to Tureynin*] Prince Shouisky hanged himself? Ivan Petrovitch? You lie. He did not kill himself. He was strangled! [*Seizes Tureynin by the collar with both hands*] You strangled him! Murderer! Beast! [*To Godunoff*] Did you know this?

GODUNOFF. God is my witness — I knew nothing!

FYODOR. Executioners! Let a scaffold be erected! Here! At once! In front of me! At once! I was

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lenient with you too long! The time has come for me to remember whose blood is running in my veins. Not without reason did my late father become suddenly a harsh tyrant! His courtiers made him the harsh man he was — you will remember him!

[*Messenger, his clothes covered with dust, holding a paper in his hand, approaches Godunoff hurriedly.*]

MESSENGER. From Uglitch — to Boris Fyodorovitch Godunoff!

FYODOR [*tearing the paper out of his hands*] Give it to me! When the Tsar himself stands before you, Boris does not exist! [*Looks at the paper, and begins to tremble*] Irinuskha — my eyes are growing weak — I can hardly see — it seems to me that I read wrong — my sight is getting dim — you had better read it!

IRINA [*glancing at the paper*] Merciful God!

FYODOR. What is it, Irina? Well?

IRINA. Tsarievitch Dimitry —

FYODOR. Fell on a knife? And stabbed himself to death? Is that it?

IRINA. Yes, Fyodor, yes.

FYODOR. In an epileptic fit he fell on a knife? Is it really true, Irina? Perhaps you did not read right — give me the paper! [*Takes the paper and glances at it, then drops it*] To death — to death — yes — he stabbed himself to death! I cannot believe it! Is not all this a dream? Brother Dimitry was to me like a son — you and I have no children, Irina!

IRINA. God has plunged all Russia into sorrow!

FYODOR. I loved him like a son. I was anxious to take him along with me, but I left him there, in Uglitch . . . Ivan Petrovitch Shouisky warned me not to leave him. What will he say now? Ah — I forgot! He will never speak again — he is dead!

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GODUNOFF [*who in the meanwhile has picked up the paper and read it*] Almighty Tsar . . .

FYODOR. Did you not say he strangled himself? While Dimitry stabbed himself? Irina — why — suppose that . . .

GODUNOFF. Tsar, you must send some one to Uglitch at once.

FYODOR. What for? I will go there myself. I want to see Dimitry myself. With my own eyes! I believe nobody.

[*Soldier approaches Godunoff.*]

SOLDIER. Signal fires are sending up smoke on the road to Serpukhovsk!

GODUNOFF. Almighty Tsar, the Khan is coming. Within a few hours his troops will surround Moscow. You cannot leave now.

KLESHNIN. Almighty Tsar, send me, your humble servant! Little Father, although I am a simple man, I will report to you whatever I see.

GODUNOFF. Prince Vassily Ivanovitch Shouisky might be trusted with the investigation of this matter. Let them both go to Uglitch and find out who is to blame for this misfortune.

FYODOR [*taken aback*] Really? You really want to send Vassily Shouisky to Uglitch? Send a nephew of the man whom you . . . whom they last night . . . [*Embraces Godunoff*] Brother-in-law! Forgive me! I stand guilty before you! Forgive me — my thoughts were tangled up — I became confused — I cannot tell truth from untruth! My Irinushka, come to me. Petrovitch, go with Prince Vassily. Prince Vassily, what was I trying to say to you? I forget. Yes, I remember now. Last week I sent Dimitry some toys — [*Weeps*] I would like to know . . . I would like to know . . . did he have time . . . to . . .

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PRINCESS [*being led by some ladies-in-waiting*] All is over! My fiancé was shot — my uncle strangled —

IRINA. Child, you will come to me. You will [illegible] me as my own daughter.

PRINCESS. Tsarina, I would like to take the veil. . . .

FYODOR. Yes, Princess, yes, take the veil! Leave this world! There is no truth in it. I myself would gladly leave it. . . . I am afraid to live in it. . . . Irina . . . save me, Irina!

[*The ladies-in-waiting lead the Princess away.*]

IRINA. Dear husband Fyodor! In prayer alone can we ask God to grant us consolation!

FYODOR. In prayer? Yes, Irina! I will go to a monastery . . . I shall pray . . .

IRINA. You cannot do it, dear husband Fyodor! You have no successor to the throne.

FYODOR. Yes. I am the last of my dyn[illegible] one — what is there for me to do, Irina?

IRINA. Dear husband, you have no cho[illegible] can administer the affairs of this kingdom, he alone. Leave in his hands the burden and responsibilities of government.

FYODOR. Yes, yes, Irina. I shall no longer interfere in anything.

GODUNOFF [*in a whisper, to Irina*] Our paths have met!

IRINA. If only they had never, never met!

[*A blowing of trumpets. Mstislavsky enters, in steel armor and helmet. Godunoff's armorer brings him his weapons.*]

MSTISLAVSKY [*to Godunoff*] Sir, the troops are in the field, awaiting your command!

GODUNOFF [*arming himself*] On, to the fight! [*The noblemen leave.*]

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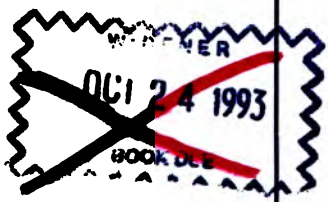

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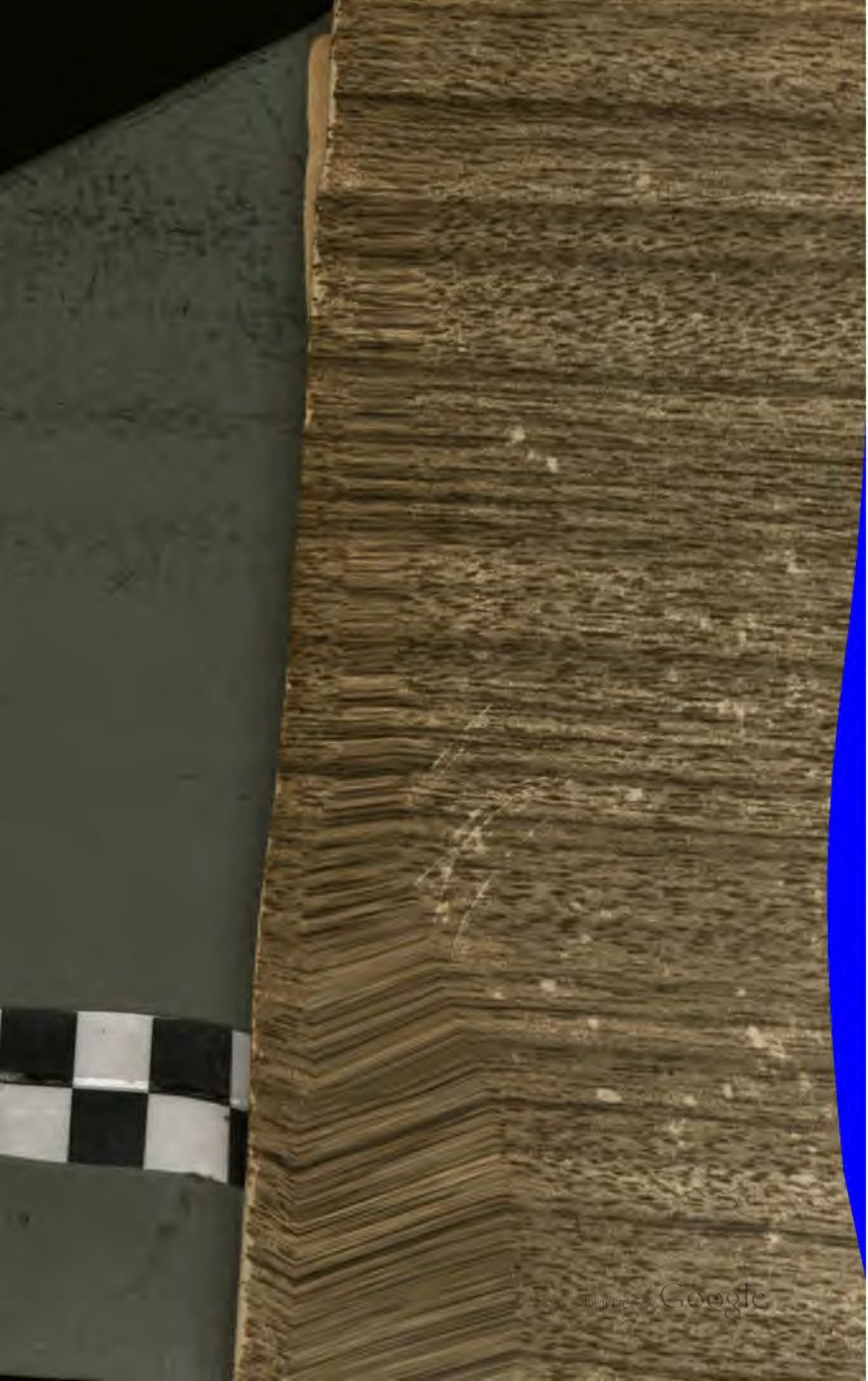
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